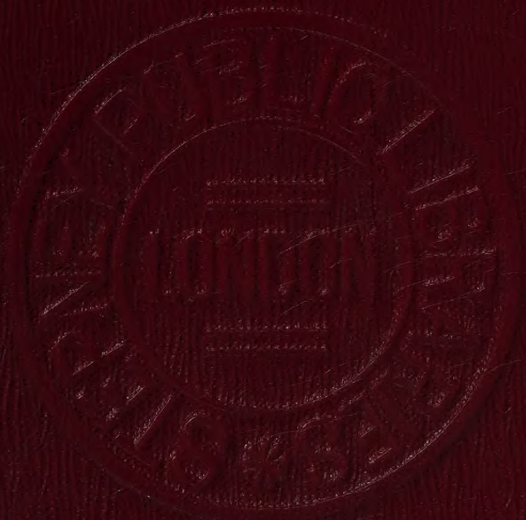
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PHILIP SNOWDEN

An Impartial Portrait

by

"EPHESIAN"
(C. E. Bechhofer Roberts)

With Half-Tone Frontispiece

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TO
MY MOTHER

FOREWORD

THE prominence which Philip Snowden has attained, nationally and internationally, makes it very desirable that an account of his career, with the lively circumstances in which he has made it, should be written. I have endeavoured to describe it in these pages without prejudice or bias.

He once suggested, as a hint to organizers of meetings, that any verbose chairman ought instantly to be seized and thrown into the nearest horsepond. I shall not, therefore, make any further prefatory remark, except to state that this volume, like the two other biographies which I have written, is in no sense "authorized" by its subject: an "authorized life," written during a public man's career, is surely among the least satisfactory of books.

C. E. B. R.

Leith Hill,
Surrey.

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PHILIP SNOWDEN

CHAPTER I

PHILIP SNOWDEN was born on July 18th, 1864, at Cowling, a village in the West Riding of Yorkshire, near the town of Keighley, which lies eighteen miles north-west of Leeds. Hence his description of himself as "only a stolid, unimaginative, unpoetical, truthful Yorkshireman."

Cowling lies close to the Lancashire border, isolated on the edge of the great moors. It is a bleak, rolling country-side, open to fierce winds, driving mists and watery suns. In the winter the snow often cuts it off from Keighley on the one side and from Colne, its Lancashire neighbour, on the other. Druids' circles on the hills testify to its loneliness; even to-day the sparse villages, clustered round the smoking mill-chimneys in the valleys, scarcely break its sombre wildness. It has its place in literature in the novels of the Brontë sisters, who lived at Haworth, just across Keighley Moor.

The parish consists of several hamlets, of which, sixty-five years ago, Middleton, lying about half a mile from the centre of Cowling, was the chief. This was, as it is to-day, a single unpaved street of some sixty poor cottages, straggling up the steep hill-side. Like every other house and wall for miles round, they are built of a local stone which, turning black from exposure to the air, gives them a false appearance of smokiness and dirt. Philip was born in the last cottage of all ; the moor comes down to its back-yard.

Cowling is a place unto itself. It is famous for miles round as the legendary spot where the villagers endeavoured to rake the moon out of the pond ; many other tales are told of the stubbornness and eccentricity of its inhabitants. Originally these had been hand-weavers ; they had held out as long as possible against the power-looms which undersold them, but at last, after much privation, the generation to which Snowden's parents belonged accepted the inevitable change. Cowling then recovered its old prosperity, and, at the time of Philip's birth, nearly every man in it was reputed to live in his own house.

His father, John Snowden, must have been a man of exceptional capability. One who knew him well, speaks of him as a devout Methodist, earnest and slow of speech, who read widely and

—of all unlikely books !—found pleasure in George Meredith's novels. In politics, like all his neighbours, he was a staunch Radical, that is to say, an advanced Liberal. He worked in the neighbouring Ickornshaw Mill, as did his wife and his two daughters, one of whom, Mrs. Shaw, still lives at Cowling.

Philip's mother, Martha Snowden, was born at Gill Top, another hamlet in the parish. As a girl she went for some time to a school at Middleton kept by a local character nicknamed " Old Peggy " ; but at the age of thirteen, she began to work at a hand-loom for her father. To the end of her days, in 1922, she remembered incidents of her youth : how she had seen the Keighley-Colne coach blown off the road at Cowling by a terrific gale ; how she travelled, a passenger in an open truck, in the first train which ever ran from Colne to Liverpool ; how the hand-weavers had chosen to starve rather than surrender to the machines. Her speech was such pure West Riding dialect, including many words now obsolete, that records were taken of it a few years before her death. Like her husband, she was renowned—even in so independent a place as Cowling—for the breadth and openness of her mind.

Many other Snowdens lived in Cowling. Few functions could take place without their participation

and, in general, their leadership. They had their places in the cricket team ; they were the backbone of the Wesleyan chapel and the Liberal Club. When, for example, a performance of "Joseph and His Brethren" was given at the Club for the benefit of the chapel funds, the parts of no fewer than three Brethren, as well as that of Dinah, were played by Snowdens, while a fifth member of the clan had the entire performance in charge.

A playfellow has stated that Snowden, as a little boy, was sturdy, quick-tempered and insistent upon obtaining his own way ; "By nature Philip is an autocrat," declares the same source. He responded, however, to the dour tradition of the neighbourhood to the extent of "taking the pledge" to abstain from strong drink ; and on one occasion he came very near to being "converted," as the Methodist phrase goes. Moved by youthful piety, he stayed behind, after the evening service in the Ickornshaw chapel, for the prayer-meeting in which only the elect participated. His father discovered him hovering near the penitents' form, and with rough common sense bade him run home to bed.

Even in those days, I am assured, he had what is called the "gift of the gab." A schoolmate well remembers him, at the age of eleven or twelve,

leaping on the school wall and delivering a wild harangue on some subject or other. This was at the local elementary school, where, displaying unusual ability, he became a pupil-teacher instead of joining the rest of his family and the bulk of his companions in the mill. When he was fifteen, his father, seeing that trade was bad in Cowling, crossed the Lancashire border to Nelson, where he remained for ten years. Philip worked for a time as a clerk in an insurance company's office in the neighbouring town of Burnley, some twelve miles from his birthplace.

Ambitious to escape from this drudgery, he read widely : Scott, Thackeray, Dickens and George Eliot provided his favourite fiction ; Channing, the Rhode Island Unitarian, his theology. He entered his name for an open competition for entry into the Civil Service ; he passed with honours, and was appointed, in 1886, to the Excise Service as a very junior official at Liverpool. From there he was transferred to Aberdeen, on the east coast of Scotland, and afterwards served in various parts of that country, including the Orkney Islands, before being moved to the south-west of England. There is something almost ambassadorial in these wide transfers.

A wiry, tough young man, he was capable of considerable physical exertion ; as a boy he had

sometimes walked twenty miles before breakfasting ; now he bicycled long distances in the discharge of his work. His grim Yorkshire sense of humour rather increased than lessened his efficiency.

During this period of his life, Snowden, like most of his relations and friends, was an ardent Liberal. " We pretended to be orthodox Liberals," one of his most intimate friends has confessed, " but in reality we were the narrowest of Tories ; if we had the power, the machinery would rust and go to rack and ruin, before we would give in to such a lot of workhands." Every local circumstance went to make him a Radical ; as the son of his father and a Wesleyan, he was born into what was then the extreme left of English politics. He afterwards declared that " I was cradled and nursed in Liberalism, and I gave a passionate adherence to my party which the most earnest Liberal could hardly hope to excel. Nothing but the deepest conviction could have induced me to desert the Liberal Party, whose creed I lisped at my father's knee." But on another occasion he admitted that his ardour for Liberalism had diminished after the Home Rule crisis of 1885.

He returned to his native village for a few days in 1891, when he was twenty-seven years old, to deliver an address to the Wesleyan Mutual Improvement Society, and another on the following evening

to the Cowling Liberal Club, on the Liquor Laws. He explained to his audience of friends and relations—among them his mother, who once again resided in the village—that, while himself a total abstainer and an ardent apostle of Temperance, he did not approve of the extreme policy of many advocates of teetotalism. Rather than cut off all access to alcohol, he thought it better to carry out the existing liquor laws to the letter, and to seek to provide working-men with counter-attractions to the public-house.

Very shortly after this journey, he fell victim to a serious cycling accident, which seriously injured his back. As a result of this accident, he was forced to keep his bed for an entire twelve-month. The Board of Inland Revenue held his post open for him for two years, until he sent in his resignation. In accepting it, the head of the district in which he had last served wrote to express regret that Snowden was leaving a service in which, had he remained, he might confidently have aspired to any post, no matter how high. He received eulogies also from the heads of the various departments of which he had been a member.

His father died about this time, but his mother helped to nurse him through his illness. Long afterwards, hurrying away from a round of political engagements to spend Christmas alone with her in

her cottage, he declared that whatever gratitude he might earn for what he had attempted to do for the world he felt it his duty to hand on to his mother, who had sustained, in those early days, "the struggle and the sacrifice, the endurance and the pain."

She lived to hear him speak in the House of Commons, although she died just too soon to know him Chancellor of the Exchequer. In January, 1922, she had the misfortune to slip on the frozen road in front of her cottage, and fracture her thigh. The injury and shock were fatal ; she passed away in her sleep a fortnight later, in her ninetieth year.

During his convalescence at Cowling Snowden interested himself in a study of various political theories. The Liberal Club suggested that he should consider reading them a paper on the strange new theory of Socialism, which was beginning to be discussed in Radical circles. A noted Socialist lecturer, Enid Stacey, visited Cowling ; Snowden talked to her and heard her speak. He set about collecting newspaper articles and books dealing with the subject, among these, apart from William Morris's poems, a series of articles by a Wesleyan minister named Keeble, Kirkup's "Enquiry into Socialism," and Robert Owen's essays. Then, as he said, like St. Paul on the

road to Damascus, he suddenly saw the light, and knew himself a Socialist.

He began to take a part in local affairs. He taught in the Wesleyan Sunday School, and was elected president of the Wesleyan Mutual Improvement Society, which organized lectures and similar social entertainments. The election of Snowden, instead of the superintendent minister, testified to his popularity, but (so one who participated, Tom Snowden, M.P., declares) it caused the expulsion of the Society from the Sunday School premises ; thereafter its meetings were held in the village hall. Snowdens were prominent in this Society, as in other Cowling institutions. There is, for example, a record of Philip Snowden presiding on its behalf over a lecture given by Mr. Emmott Snowden, of Burnley, on " A Holiday Tour through Belgium, Holland, the Ardennes and the Rhine," the management of the magic-lantern resting in the hands of Mr. Joseph Snowden.

Snowden's adherence to Socialism was confirmed in the summer of 1894 by the activities of a recently founded Socialist propagandist society, the Independent Labour Party (the nature of which will be described in a later chapter). Keighley, six miles away, already possessed a Socialist nucleus. Herbert Horner, a schoolmaster who had worked in a worsted mill at the age of eight and afterwards

sold newspapers, established the Keighley Labour Union in 1892 as a meeting-place for discussion and instruction. On June 19th, 1894, the members of the Labour Union made an excursion to Cowling to hear a Mr. Hartley of Bradford address an open-air meeting, at the bottom of Sun Street on the main road, on "The Need for a Labour Party."

It is to be presumed that the speaker did not possess exceptionally convincing qualities ; for it is on record that, after his speech, Mr. Benjamin Snowden, the leader of the Cowling Liberals, moved a resolution, which was carried unanimously, expressing the entire confidence of the meeting in the Liberal Party generally and in Sir Isaac Holden, the sitting Liberal Member for the constituency, in particular.

The Socialists, however, returned to the attack a few weeks later, when S. G. Hobson, an Irish Quaker who was in various ways to exercise much influence on the progress of the Socialist Movement in England, held a meeting on the same spot to advocate the necessity of independent Labour representation in Parliament. Hobson tells me that he still remembers seeing Snowden, a pale youth in an invalid-chair, take notes of his arguments.

Very shortly after these meetings, and perhaps in some degree in consequence of them, Snowden

undertook a task which was entirely to alter his life. He lectured to the Cowling Liberal Club on "The Religion of Socialism."

He opened his address by defining the term "Socialism" and stressing its religious aspects. Then he drew the attention of his audience to the evils of the present day, and, in passing, contrasted the "tramping Socialist of Nazareth" with His modern bishops who drew huge salaries while thousands of their countrymen starved. He went on to condemn town councils for spending thousands of pounds on the occasion of Queen Victoria's journey to the North in the previous May (to open the Manchester Ship Canal), at a time when hundreds, perhaps thousands, of children were starving in the same towns. In conclusion, he declared the glorious ideals at which the religion of Socialism aimed, and pictured a perfect State, "hardly to be distinguished from a modern Utopia," if Socialist views were put into practice.

This was Snowden's first public speech on a political topic. It split the politicians of Cowling into two parties; Snowden led over a group of them into a local branch of the Independent Labour Party. Reports of his eloquence and unconventional views reached Keighley, whence an invitation soon came to him to repeat his address to the Keighley Labour Union in the Co-operative Hall.

He accepted, and in the meantime stood successfully for election to the Cowling Parish Council, becoming its honorary clerk.

At the end of the year a controversy began in the *Keighley News*—then, as now, the principal journal of the district, and a very admirable example of a provincial paper—on the subject of Temperance and Socialism. Cowling was cited, against Horner, the Socialist, as an example that thrift and Temperance were the true paths to the betterment of working-class conditions. Snowden intervened with a letter, dated January 1st, 1895, the first words ever written by him to appear in print.

He set out to prove that " the vampire of capitalism and landlordism " had sucked the life-blood of Cowling as deeply as that of less abstemious communities. Three questions had been raised in the controversy : had wages in Cowling increased during the past fifteen years ; had rents decreased ; could weavers there earn sufficient to support their homes without their wives and children working ? Snowden claimed to have expert knowledge of Cowling conditions. He had asked twenty-three of his neighbours, he said, whether they could earn half as much on one loom as they could fifteen or twenty years before. Nineteen had replied definitely that they could not ; the remaining four thought they might earn half as much if they had

full work. In other words, wages in Cowling had dropped by a half in the last fifteen years ; while rents, he found, had gone up in the same proportion. As for a man's being able to earn enough to keep his family from the mill, Snowden gave precise figures. Of the 203 families who lived exclusively by work in the mill, seven wives out of every ten, and nine out of every ten children over the age of eleven, had to work. In the other families, the wives were mostly too old, or their families were so large that they were compelled to stay at home. The young married women who stayed at home took in children to nurse or did other work " to addle a bit o' summat."

Two circumstances, he explained, made conditions in Cowling better than elsewhere : weavers could easily cross into Lancashire, where wages were higher ; and the local employers were by no means the brutal autocrats who existed in some parts of the country. He pointed out parenthetically that many Socialists erred in confusing Capitalism with capitalists ; the employers, he said, were often as much the victims of the industrial system as their workers.

Thus he summed up the controversy, proving that even a village so notoriously hard-headed, thrifty and abstemious as Cowling had lately found its wages decreasing, its rents increasing,

its population reduced by emigration, and its women and children forced to work.

He indicted Capitalism. The two thousand working weavers of Cowling, he went on, had been praised for having saved an aggregate of as much as £10 a head in the Yorkshire Penny Bank. But this was all they had to show for their labour ; for the degradation of their womanhood ; for the withholding from their children of every advantage which these had a right to demand ; for babes being torn from their mothers for twelve hours a day ; for children shivering in the cold in the winter evenings, waiting for the mill to close and the parents to return home ; for meals prepared overnight in tin and handkerchief, to be steamed next day at the mill boiler ; for the weariness of wives and mothers faced with the day's housework after their return from the mill ; for the sacrifice of every holiday to housework. Fiercely he attacked the injustice of the " Juggernaut car of Capitalism," which could not convert the " dying yells and crackling bones " of its victims into money value. The mill-hands of Cowling were " heroes and martyrs," sustained only by the hope of struggling to the end, and by the faith that, in death, they would at last be at rest. He had heard them at their prayer meetings shout frantically, " Thank God there are no Monday mornings in Heaven ! "

This, he concluded, was the truth about the "Teetotal Paradise" of Cowling.

The letter was written with passionate sincerity, which sometimes made its phrasing a little incoherent. It proved to Horner and the other members of the Keighley Labour Union that in Snowden they had a recruit of exceptional ability and earnestness.

In the following month, February, 1895, he read "The Religion of Socialism" to an "excessively crowded" audience at Keighley. So satisfactory was his début in this larger sphere that he was invited in the following month to address the Keighley Labour Union again at the Queen's Theatre on "The Cry of the Children." A local commentator prefaced his report of this speech, the main argument of which was that the germ of true social progress lies in education, with the statement that Snowden's "recent speeches and writings on social topics have created some stir locally."

He was becoming a well-known figure in Keighley and Cowling. He and Horner transformed the Keighley Labour Union into a branch of the Independent Labour Party, and addressed street-corner and club meetings on its behalf in both places. At Cowling he was nominated also for the School Board. Proof of his increasing popularity

is afforded by the fact that, although all five of the retiring members of the Board stood for re-election, Snowden displaced one of them and came fourth in the poll.

It now became known that a Parliamentary General Election was imminent, and would probably come towards the end of the year. The Liberals of Keighley discovered that their Member, Sir Isaac Holden, did not intend to stand again, and looked round for a successor, whom they found in Alderman John Brigg. To advance his cause, Mr. Brigg prepared to tour the constituency. An inaugural meeting at Keighley passed by acclamation the conventional resolution declaring him a fit and proper person to represent the Liberal Party in Parliament, and pledging all present to work in his interests. The second meeting of his candidature was held at Cowling on April 26th, 1895. After Mr. Brigg and his chairman had addressed the meeting, and the usual resolution had been read out, the Liberals were suddenly dumbfounded by the spectacle of Philip Snowden rising to move an amendment.

He read it out. "I beg to move that this meeting, having heard Mr. John Brigg, considers that he is not a candidate in sympathy with the working classes of this constituency." At this point Snowden was interrupted by cries of "Nonsense,"

but persisted : " And moreover this meeting declines to endorse or support the candidature of the nominee of a Capitalist caucus who is pledged to support a Party which insults the claims of the workers and resists every means by which they can secure social improvements."

Having hurled this bomb, Snowden advanced to the attack. Mr. Brigg's chairman, he said, had spoken of Mr. Brigg as having risen from the ranks. The chairman seemed to think that this was a good thing. So it might be ; but not when it meant men " trampling and crushing every human instinct, and by that means seeking to rise to a pinnacle where the stench of their putrifying victims could not reach them."

This aroused loud applause from Snowden's friends, and protests and hisses from Mr. Brigg's. Snowden turned to the assembly. " Look at this platform ! " he cried. " Are these the men of your household ? Are their wives factory-operatives and household drudges ? Do their families get up at five o'clock in the morning ? " There was a further uproar, mingled with cries of " Yes " and " No." He didn't blame these men, he went on, but he did blame their supporters for not being able to see through their transparent hypocrisy. So long as the House of Commons was filled with carpet-baggers, professional politicians, landlords,

brewers, rascally lawyers, blacklegs, company promoters and land-grabbers, so long would workingmen deserve that their sufferings should be mocked, and their calamities laughed at !

Waiting for a break in the applause and the booing, he appealed to the men of Cowling to show that they were not mere voting cattle, to be farmed by the two old Parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. " God's word has gone forth that He will not for ever allow His children to be the victims of cruel task-masters and the bond-slaves of tyranny. . . . You can help our Movement and you can hinder it ; but you cannot prevent its full realization. If you continue to trample on justice, if you continue to be content to see your wives and innocent children the victims of the parasites and blood-suckers who gnaw at their vitals, then I warn you that you and your wives and your children will be hurled on into the whirlpool of a bloody revolution."

I need not say that it is difficult to compute with accuracy the numbers who voted for the resolution and for the amendment respectively. There seems no doubt that Mr. Brigg's supporters were in a majority, but Snowden's amendment received something between the thirty votes, which was the Liberal calculation, and the ninety which his friends claimed. On one point, however, all

were agreed. So lively a scene had never before been known in Cowling.

It had an immediate sequel. At a meeting held at the Queen's Theatre, Keighley, on the first Sunday afternoon in June, Tom Mann proposed and Snowden was asked to second a resolution that, "In the opinion of this meeting the most urgent question of the present moment is that of the unemployed, since it inflicts great hardships on the wage-earners and keeps down wages. As steps, therefore, towards improving the position of the workers, this meeting strongly favours the establishment of a legal eight-hours' day, the provision of old-age pensions, the restoration of the land to the people, together with the direct representation of Labour in Parliament and on all public bodies."

Snowden referred to criticism of him because of his attack on Mr. Brigg. "So long as I have the sympathy of the working-classes, and so long as my attitude meets with their approval, I am indifferent to the opinion of my opponents. I am not anxious to have a good name with all men. 'Woe to thee when all men shall speak well of thee!'" He went on to say, amid tumultuous applause, that "The history of the political reforms of the last sixty years and the actions of the political parties to-day irresistibly force me to the conclusion

that the working-classes are, and have been, the sport of political Parties ; and that the leaders of both political parties are, with very few exceptions, actuated by no other motive than to preserve and strengthen their own class-interests."

Three weeks later, Lord Rosebery's Government having fallen on the Cordite division, Snowden addressed his first meeting as "Probable Independent Labour candidate" for the Keighley division.

In those days the official expenses of an election were apportioned among the candidates in equal shares. Sir Isaac Holden had been returned unopposed at the previous General Election. This time, however, there was to be a fight ; it was known that a Conservative candidate would stand ; and it was estimated that the official expenses would amount to between £450 and £750. Thus, if Snowden stood, he would have to find a third of this sum.

The sudden fall of the Government made it necessary for him to raise his fund, not in five or six months, as he had hoped, but in a few weeks. At his first meeting at the corner of Sun Street, Haworth, his chairman assured an audience of four hundred people that Snowden would certainly go to the poll if the necessary funds could be collected.

The " probable candidate " made a violent attack upon the Liberal Party in Parliament. It was composed, he declared, " of horse-racing aristocrats, like Rosebery ; of sinecure-hunting lawyers, like Gully ; of 40,000 acre landlords, like Acland ; of £12,000 a year mining-royalty-owners, like Sir Wilfrid Lawson ; of speculative company promoters, like Mundella ; of brewers, like Sir James Stansfeld ; and of millionaire labour-exploiters, *like Sir Isaac Holden*." This reference to the local Member of Parliament was very well received. What sympathy could there be, he asked, between such men and the working-classes ? The workers had, every one of them, to work so much harder every day to maintain the privileges and the luxuries of these men and their hangers-on ! These men knew that every increase of power that Labour obtained left them so much the weaker ; " I am sanguine enough to hope that, within a dozen years, we shall have in Parliament a Labour Ministry giving legislative effect to the reforms which we are now advocating."

Money came in slowly, in driblets of pennies and twopences contributed by the working-men who attended his meetings, but it did not come in nearly fast enough to make Snowden's candidature certain.

Nevertheless he told a meeting at Denholme

that the events of the first week of his campaign had justified him in the belief that he was about to win a glorious victory. He complained also that he had been unfairly accused of using violent language. "Some of you may have heard of me through the newspapers, and you will have expected to hear from me abusive denunciation and inflammatory speech. I feel that I shall disappoint you: I have far too good a programme to waste my time in denouncing an opponent." This programme, he said, could be summed up in a single phrase, "The improvement of the conditions of the working-classes."

After his speech a heckler complained that Snowden had spoken of old people being "carted to the workhouse to rot there," and demanded that he should either justify or withdraw this charge.

"I think this is a question which does not require an answer," replied Snowden. "In my opening remarks I gave you credit for being intelligent. Do you imagine that I use the word 'rot' in its literal sense? Certainly not. If I were to withdraw the word, I should substitute one much worse."

The chairman then interposed to assure the audience that Snowden had answered the objector very satisfactorily; for his own part, he added, he would prefer suicide to going into the workhouse.

Liberal supporters in the crowd then accused Snowden and his friends of being Tories in disguise, bent upon splitting the Radical vote ; and the meeting at last broke up in disorder.

At a further meeting in Keighley itself, Snowden's chairman regretfully announced that at least £140 more were needed in a fortnight if the candidate was to go to the poll. Snowden in his speech explained that, if returned to Parliament, he would devote himself first to the reform of politics, and then to the reform of industry. Nor would he stop there. If the Labour Movement was to aim only at material improvements he would not be there to-night. " I believe it to be a moral and religious Movement ; I believe that it contains the germs of a higher life—a life where materialism will be replaced by spirituality." That this belief was not wholly shared by his audience is clear from a ribald question whether Snowden would accept a peerage if it were offered him—a question which he did not consider worth answering.

His supporters engaged a committee-room in the market-place, but still the money did not arrive. Although collections at his meetings varied from 19s. to £5, only about £70 or £80 were collected. The official expenses were fixed at £480, so that Snowden's share would work out at £160. After several anxious conferences of

his committee it became clear that this sum could not be raised ; on nomination day, therefore, the Labour Party announced that they could not present their candidate, advising their supporters to abstain from voting for either of the other candidates. The result of the poll was to send Mr. Brigg to Westminster with 5,036 votes, a majority of 840 over his Conservative opponent, Mr. Bairstow.

Snowden, however, had made his name, not only in the constituency but in Socialist circles for a considerable distance round. The election resulted in a considerable turnover throughout the country, the Liberals losing nearly a hundred seats to the Conservatives and Liberal-Unionists. Speaking at the opening of a Labour Club at Haworth, Snowden claimed that the Independent Labour Party, to which he belonged, had had a considerable influence on the results. Mr. Brigg, he asserted, had been elected only by the sufferance of working-men voters, while in seven surrounding constituencies the Liberals had been beaten through their abstention.

This account of the opening stage of Snowden's political career may fitly end with the mention of an address which he gave very soon afterwards to the Keighley Sunday Circle on the theme, "Thy Kingdom Come." He told his audience that,

" Notwithstanding that nearly two thousand years have passed since the Sermon on the Mount was preached ; and notwithstanding that prayers to Him rise to-day from a million altars, and praise to Him from a million voices, there is not one evil which Christ came to destroy, not one hypocrisy which He denounced so vigorously, which is not still rampant amongst us." Developing this theme, Snowden concluded by inviting the Sunday Circle, first to " make it possible for men to be Christians ; then teach them how to be Christians."

CHAPTER II

SNOWDEN spoke anywhere and everywhere, indoors or out. He always tried to prepare his speeches carefully in advance, often learning them by heart in order to acquire ease and fluency in delivery. Any audience would do, large or small. A very early memory of one of my friends is hearing Snowden address a group of weavers one afternoon outside a village post-office ; at the end he went inside to drink tea and discuss religion with the postmaster.

It must be understood that he never failed, from the outset, to preach the truth of the old maxim that Heaven helps him who helps himself ; it was not enough, in his view, that Socialism was *right*—Socialists must use every effort, no matter how small, to aid their cause. He has told the anecdote, to illustrate this creed, of a devout man who coveted his neighbour's turkey. The man prayed long and earnestly that the turkey might be sent from his neighbour's back-yard into his own. When this prayer did not avail, he modified it to the extent of praying that *he* might be sent into his

neighbour's back-yard. And, remarkably enough, this prayer was successful !

With his increasing experience of propagandist methods, Snowden was able to draw up a list of hints for speakers and organizers of Socialist meetings. Thus, he foreshadowed the vogue of Community Singing by urging his comrades to arrange singing at all their meetings ; since a good hymn put everybody in a good humour. While, for open-air meetings, he advised them to hire a waggon, and place on it a table and three or four chairs, in order to impress their audiences. One comrade should be appointed to ensure the timely arrival of the waggon and the chairs ; if he failed in this important duty, he was to be dismissed from favour.

The term " Comrade," it may be mentioned, was at this time nearly as popular in the Socialist Movement in England as it has since become in Bolshevist Russia. There appears, none the less, to have been a certain opposition to it, for I have found in a contemporary publication, the official organ of the Independent Labour Party, to which Snowden belonged, the following editorial reply to an indignant reader who had objected to " Comrade Jones " being metamorphosed into " Mr. Jones " : " The term ' Comrade ' which, in the earlier days of the Movement, was expressive of a close and deeply

inter-dependent band of associates, has now, with the wide growth and impersonal relations of the Movement, become an affectation. . . . After all, 'Mr.' is a neutral and merely courteous particle ; and we see no reason why Socialists should affect any other prefix. 'Comrade' should be reserved as a special and appropriate term of distinction or esteem."*

To understand the important rôle which Snowden has played in politics and Socialism, it is necessary to turn from these frivolities, and apply ourselves, as briefly as possible, to an examination of the world of ideas and "Movements" into which he entered at this time. He has been materially responsible for the rise of Parliamentary Labour. As Herbert Sidebotham, one of the leading English political journalists, said recently at a Parliamentary Press Gallery dinner to Snowden, "He is the real father of the present Labour Party. The old Labour Party were taught to speak Marxism ; then Keir Hardie taught them to speak Scots ; but Philip Snowden has rendered a great service by teaching them to speak English."

The General Public (that very gullible entity), in

* This reminds me of an occasion when Will Dyson, the brilliant Australian cartoonist, was talking to George Lansbury, the present First Commissioner of Works in the Labour Government. "Isn't that so, Brother ?" asked Lansbury for the twentieth time. "No, Aunt !" Dyson replied wearily.

both England and America, allowed itself to be kept almost wholly in ignorance of the rise of political Socialism until, in 1906, the House of Commons was suddenly confronted with a new, independent Party of twenty-nine Labour Members. Since then Westminster has seen two Labour Governments, and is likely to see more in the early future. But even to-day few people outside the "Movement," and not by any means all inside it, understand how this triumphant rise to power has come.

It is not necessary here to discuss the innumerable meanings which have been attributed to the term, "Socialism." Dr. Arthur Shadwell, in his "The Socialist Movement," has summarized the views of some two hundred and sixty British Socialists :

> Socialism is described by different writers as a religion ; a faith ; a philosophy of life ; a theory of evolution ; a step in evolution ; an historical necessity ; an economic necessity ; a new conception of society ; an attitude towards life ; practical Christianity ; the Kingdom of God on earth ; an opportunity for self-expression ; an economic system ; an ethical code ; a class struggle ; a spirit ; a theory of political action ; a theory of society ; the opposite of Individualism ; a tendency ; democracy applied

to industry ; the science of minding our own business ; a body of economic, political and social doctrine and philosophy ; a scientific theory ; man's mind developed ; a criticism ; a feeling ; an ethical religious mass-movement ; a system of political organization ; science wedded to art ; common sense ; a theory of national and municipal housekeeping ; mankind functioning in the spiritual plane ; a collective consciousness of humanity ; the antithesis of Capitalism ; the political and social faith of all sensible men—besides many other things.

Snowden's contribution to this symposium is one of the clearest and most sensible. He defines Socialism as follows : " It is a system of industrial and social organization, where the common needs of individuals will be supplied by the original, co-operative efforts of Society, instead of the present competitive system, where such needs are, in the main, supplied by individuals competing to supply them from the motive of individual profit. The Socialist organization involves the collective ownership of the productive and distributive capital employed in the Socialized businesses. The method of management of Socialized concerns will be by the ablest and best qualified men under the democratic direction of the community."

The " Socialist Movement " or " Labour Movement "—the terms must now be accepted as practically identical—which boiled up in England at the time when Snowden entered political life and which is to-day responsible for the existence of a vast political party, functioning in Parliament and throughout the country, took its rise from several originally separate sources.

First—to mention only the chief—there was the Nonconformist and Radical revolt against the old hegemony of squire and parson in the country districts. A revolt against privilege, this was in essence anti-Tory.

Secondly, workmen rebelled against the disgraceful labour conditions in the new industrial districts of the Midlands and the North. Since the employers were themselves, in large part, Liberals—especially in Snowden's birthplace, the West Riding of Yorkshire—this struggle was essentially anti-Liberal.

Thirdly, the self-educative efforts of the working-class must be taken into account, with all that mass of sentimental middle-class effort which set itself to uplift the " underdog." The importance of the Temperance Movement, for example, in the early history of British Socialism has never been appreciated at its true value. A large number of men who have since made their mark in Labour politics

began their careers as propagandists on Temperance platforms. Snowden prides himself on being a total abstainer, and on having worked in the Temperance cause. When he was chairman of the Independent Labour Party he pointed out, as a matter for satisfaction, that every chairman for six years had been a total abstainer. Arthur Henderson, Foreign Secretary in the second Labour Government, used, as a Wesleyan lay minister, to preach Temperance from the pulpit ; even Tom Mann, now a Communist leader, and Ben Tillett, one of the latest chairmen of the Trades Union Conference, were originally Temperance lecturers.

The Socialist Movement in England, then, was largely formed from three separate movements of revolt : against the parson and squire ; against the brutal employer ; and against the degradation of the working-man by his own weaknesses. To join these three movements into one required more than the mutual sympathy of their participants. Two things were needed—a theory and an organization.

The theory—and a very dubious theory it is—was provided by Karl Marx, who, with more skill than originality, elaborated a dogma to which all three movements could subscribe. This was the " materialistic interpretation of history," which his collaborator, Engels, has thus summarized : " In every historical epoch the prevailing mode of

economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following upon it, form the basis upon which is built up—and by which alone can be explained—the political and intellectual history of that epoch." According to Marx's pronouncement the present state of society reflects its economic structure, which is Capitalism. Acceptance of this proposition gives a basis of unity to all three groups which I have mentioned ; since all the phenomena which they detest—social privilege, bad working conditions, even the vices of the poor—are maintained, if Marx is right, by the existence of Capitalism.

" The whole history of mankind," Engels continues, " has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited classes, ruling and oppressed classes. This struggle has to-day reached a stage of development in which the exploited and oppressed classes cannot attain their emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling classes without at the same time, *and once for all*, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class-distinctions and class-struggles."

In other words, the present structure of society is the one immediately preceding the ideal. Since the destruction of Capitalism will remove all the evils from which the working-classes suffer, then

surely (so it may be argued) every desired improvement in working-class conditions and habits will thus be achieved. By blaming Capitalism for every mischance of working-class life, the three groups—anti-Tory, anti-Liberal, and working-class evangelist—could safely join forces.

But how is Capitalism to be destroyed, and the ideal world of Socialism to be substituted? Marx assured his readers that this development was inevitable: the world simply couldn't help "going Socialist"! As a faithful disciple of Hegel, Marx believed with this philosopher that every notion bears in itself its negative, and that from their collision a new notion arises. Applying this to his dogma, Marx explained that, with the inevitable clash between the exploiting classes and the exploited, Capitalism would perish; and Socialism, the final and glorious climax of human society, would emerge. A negro revivalist preacher could not be more confident that Paradise is close at hand.

Nevertheless, what was a good believer to do next? This was not so simple, and the Socialist Movement in the last century—Snowden like the rest—arrived only by slow stages at a general agreement. (Complete agreement has not yet been reached; it is probable that faith in the Marxian dogma will collapse first.) These stages were largely accidental in their sequence. Henry

George's visit to England in 1882, following the publication of his "Progress and Poverty," with its demand for the taxation of land as the cure for all ills, persuaded large numbers of English Socialists that the land must be nationalized as a first step towards Socialism. Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward," a Utopian fantasy of a Socialist State, persuaded them that Nationalization ought not to stop at the land. By the beginning of the 'nineties the overwhelming majority of British Socialists had satisfied themselves that the "Nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange" was, simultaneously, the principal weapon by which to bring into being the Socialist State—sometimes tenderly entitled the "Co-operative Commonwealth"—and also the industrial basis upon which that State should be organized.

It has never been wholly clear, however, whether the death of Capitalism is to be an execution or a euthanasia. "Revolutionary Socialists" believe that the present social structure must be destroyed by violence before the Socialist State can succeed it. "Evolutionary Socialists," or "Reformists," on the other hand—among whom Snowden is numbered—are confident that Capitalism can be "put to sleep," chiefly by Parliamentary gas; and Society transformed almost painlessly into the Co-operative Commonwealth. The latter school

dares to express doubts about parts of Marx's interpretation of history and his theory of the Class War which is based on it. One may accept the theoretical existence of the Class War, Snowden has said, without seeking to make its relentless prosecution the mainspring of Socialist policy.

But since both "Revolutionary Socialists" and "Reformist Socialists" start with common purposes and seek identical ends, I need not attempt here to judge their rival claims for leading the proletariat into the Promised Land. It is, in any case, a dangerous topic; an acute observer pointed out long ago that, while a Socialist may pass over any personal insult to himself, the unforgivable offence is to suggest that his tactics are wrong.

Unfortunately for both schools, the proletariat outside the ranks of professed Socialists, who could not claim to be very numerous, appeared, at the time when Snowden became a Socialist, to be convinced of neither the inevitability, nor even the desirability, of Socialism. Many working-men were called, but not very many responded. The Socialists, perplexed but undismayed—for did they not know themselves the apostles of an *inevitable* human development?—looked round for an organized working-class body which they could convert to their creed, and persuade to support it, both with numbers and with money. They found this

in the Trades Unions, organizations of working-men formed to protect and advance the interests of their members in the welter of industrial life. The Socialists, therefore, set themselves to woo the Trades Unions. Their wooing, as is said to be so often the way of men, was sometimes gentle and sometimes almost brutal ; but it was persistent, and eventually it succeeded.

When Snowden accepted Socialism, the courting of the Trades Unions by the Socialists was in its first fervour. He was destined to take a notable share in pressing the suit to a successful union.

One reason why he so quickly became prominent in the Socialist world was because his character and ability raised him far above most of his fellows in it. It is common to Utopian " movements " in all ages and countries to include in their ranks an abnormal number of abnormal people. There are Shelleys on the one hand ; on the other, ambitious charlatans desperate of success in existing Society, and unscrupulous how they climb into prominence through a rebel movement ; and, a third section, congenital busybodies anxious to regulate congenital underdogs. The history of Socialism in England and America, especially since its transformation in the former country to a mainly political movement, has been honeycombed with hysteria and folly, jealousy and self-seeking, and every form of

degeneracy and incompetence. Yet, all the time, the ideals of the earliest (and pre-Marxian) pioneers of social reform have been upheld by a band of devoted Socialist men and women who have never betrayed the high aims which they set themselves ; and which they have, often vainly, demanded from their colleagues.

Whatever their errors—and these have been many—conscious lapses are no part of them. Of this group, Philip Snowden is surely the most notable in British public life to-day.

CHAPTER III

SNOWDEN once explained that his motto as a speaker was Josh Billings's precept : "When I am going to speak, I fill myself up to the brim, and then take out the bung." A Socialist speaker, he added, ought always to be full of information.

He himself has never failed to be full of information on all subjects which interest him, as, for example, the importance of Parliamentary action to the Labour Movement. A few shrewd Socialists even to-day hold that industrial pressure by the Trades Unions is the only effective means of improving working-class conditions and overthrowing Capitalism. Snowden has never accepted this. In his view, bad laws are responsible for bad conditions ; and good laws make good conditions. If by legislative action in the House of Commons an industrial system can be introduced, by which every willing worker shall be afforded a chance to work, this alone, he has said, would change a working-man's life "from a Hell to a Heaven on earth." Only by political action, he has always

held, can the working-classes be brought to a consciousness of their plight, and of their sure salvation through Socialism.

That working-men should represent their fellows in Parliament is, to be sure, not primarily a Socialist idea. It has been argued for at least a century (whether rightly or wrongly need not be discussed here), that only working-men are capable of appreciating the distresses and the needs of their own class, and of putting this point of view before Parliament. Gladstone himself declared in the House of Commons that " The great blot on our representative system is that we have not been able to bring working-men within these walls. When the Reform Act of 1867 was passed, so largely increasing the constituencies, there were few Members who did not hope that one result of the change would be that we should have the pleasure of welcoming in this House some of our fellow-citizens of the working-class."

The Socialist political creed, of course, is based on the assumption that, because a man belongs to the working-class, he must of necessity accept and preach a certain code of political ideas. He must stand for Free Trade, though his job may be imperilled by unrestricted foreign imports ; for Nationalization (though, both as a worker and a consumer, he may loathe the inefficiency and

pedantry of officialdom) ; for Pacifism (though, as 1914 showed, he is as swift as any other man to realize a threat to his country's safety) ; for the inevitability of Socialism, to which he has probably an instinctive aversion. That this creed is plainly fallacious has not, however, prevented its almost whole-hearted acceptance by the " Movement."

The Labour Representation League, founded in 1869 by a number of Radicals in the extreme wing of the Liberal Party, was not the first body to seek the return of working-men to Parliament, but the first with which I will concern myself here. After four years spent in discussion and in examining constituencies most suitable for its purpose, the League nominated a dozen working-men as " Liberal-Labour " candidates at the General Election of 1874. Two of these were elected : Thomas Burt, for Morpeth ; and Alexander Macdonald, for Stafford. Having achieved this, the League perished ; but not before making a fool of itself over the assumption by Queen Victoria of the title of " Empress " of India which, it declared, was " wholly repugnant to the feelings of the English people and, like the word *Emperor*, associated with the worst forms of despotic government."

Even in those early days the apostles of direct working-class representation recognized the necessity of obtaining Trades Union support. The

objects of the League were brought before the second annual Trades Union Congress in 1869, which decided "to support the Labour Representation League, just established in London, to obtain the return of actual working-men to the Commons' House of Parliament." Two years later the Congress, which had incidentally appointed a Parliamentary Committee to watch Trades Union interests at Westminster, declared that "The direct representation of Labour is a necessity, not only in the interests of the working-men as a class, but also in the interests of the nation at large."

Neither of these resolutions envisaged the creation of a separate Labour Party in Parliament; in theory, indeed, there was no reason why working-men candidates should not stand in the Conservative interest. Thomas Burt, however, had already coined a phrase as mischievous as it is untrue: "A Conservative working-man is either a fool or a flunkey." This sentiment has been enthusiastically accepted by the Trades Unions and other working-class organizations, although a large proportion of their members demonstrate its falseness at every election. Burt meant that working-men ought, in their own interests, to vote Liberal; but, to-day, Liberal working-men too are condemned as the willing or unwilling enemies of their class. It is, however, only fair to Burt to

admit that the organizers of the Conservative Party—the "Stupid Party"—have never sufficiently understood the importance of encouraging intelligent working-men and, nowadays, working-women, to stand as its candidates.

The miners, isolated and self-centred by the nature of their employment, were even in the 'seventies the best-organized and most politically minded of the Trades Unions. Both Burt and Macdonald were officials of miners' Trades Unions, and were paid by these while they sat in Parliament among the Liberals. In the General Election of 1880, they were joined in the House of Commons by Henry Broadhurst, an official of the Stonemasons' Union, who had been returned for Stoke-on-Trent as a "Liberal and Labour" candidate.

A number of Socialist societies came into existence about this time. The Democratic Federation was founded in 1881 by Henry Mayers Hyndman, a wealthy Marxian. Its policy was at first chiefly Radical, except for its advocacy of land nationalization; but two years later it became transformed into a purely Socialist body under the title of the Social Democratic Federation. An active member was William Morris, the poet and artist, who in 1884 split the Federation and founded a short-lived Socialist League.

The Fabian Society too was founded in 1883

to preach the new theories of Nationalization and its corollary Municipalization, under the general title of "Collectivism." As the Fabian Society's name (derived from Fabius, a Roman general who knew how to wait) denotes, it sought to further the downfall of Capitalism and the triumph of Socialism by gradual, educative processes; by permeating every political body with the consciousness of the inevitability and desirability of Collectivist Socialism; rather than by the violent methods advocated by the Social Democratic Federation. All over the country Socialist groups grew up, inspired by one or other or all of the doctrines of the working-class "Movement." Their members were encouraged by the appointment, for the first time in 1885, of working-men as justices of the peace.

The General Election of 1885, with a greatly enlarged electorate and redistributed seats, gave an immediate opportunity to working-class candidates to test public opinion. Macdonald had died in 1881, but eleven Liberal-Labour working-men were returned to Parliament. All were Gladstonians; all stood as supporters of the "Grand Old Man" or, more irreverently, the "Grand Old Umbrella." Broadhurst, indeed, had already become Under-Secretary at the Home Office in Mr. Gladstone's Ministry. Of the eleven successful candidates, Burt, W. Abraham, B. Pickard,

J. Wilson, C. Fenwick, W. Crawford and G. Howell were officials of Miners' Unions ; Broadhurst belonged to the Stonemasons' ; W. R. Cremer to the Carpenters' ; J. Leicester to the Glassworkers' ; and Joseph Arch, the champion of the agricultural labourer, to the Labourers'. It is curious, in the light of after-events, to recall that Arch's sponsors in Parliament were Joseph Chamberlain and Jesse Collings.

The Social Democratic Federation also had run three working-class candidates at the Election—not, of course, as Liberals, but as independent Socialists. John Burns fought Nottingham against both Liberal and Tory candidates ; after a lively contest, in which troops were called out, he polled 598 votes against the Liberal's 6,639 and the Tory's 3,797. His two companions were even less fortunate. Although assisted (as Burns was not) by Tory money—for the Conservatives were glad to have this opportunity of splitting the Liberal-Radical vote—one of them, at Hampstead, polled only twenty-seven votes ; the other, at Kennington, only thirty-two.

Encouraged by the success of the Trades Union candidates, the Trades Union Congress of 1886 decided to elect annually a Labour Electoral Committee to " act in conjunction with the Parliamentary Committee, the Labour representatives in the

House of Commons, and the friends of Labour Representation throughout the country." In the General Election of this year, however, Arch, Leicester and Wilson were defeated. Like their colleagues, they had vigorously associated themselves with Gladstone's Irish Home Rule proposals ; Arch and Leicester had issued a manifesto before the Election urging the working-men to support Gladstone, "the hero of a hundred fights, the champion of Liberty, of the people's cause and the public peace," against the Tory leader, Lord Salisbury, "the upholder of class privilege as opposed to popular rights, the enemy of your recent franchise, the coercionist and would-be exterminator of millions of horny-handed sons of toil from their Motherland to make way for flocks and herds." As partial consolation for these three losses, James Rowlands, a London watchmaker, was elected for Finsbury ; and R. B. Cunninghame Graham for North Lanarkshire. Anything but a working-man by birth or environment, Graham was nevertheless so advanced in his views as to rank as a Socialist in the House of Commons.

The Liberals, split and defeated over Home Rule, sought to repair their shattered fortunes by encouraging working-men to stand as Liberal candidates in working-class constituencies. The Tory leaders, seeing which way the wind was blowing,

also pronounced themselves in favour of putting forward working-class candidates ; but local Conservative associations took little notice.

There was as yet, then, no sign of a Labour Party independent of the other two Parties ; nor had the Trades Union Congress seriously considered such a prospect. Yet a trial of strength was bound to come soon in the Trades Union ranks between the upholders of *Socialist* working-class representation and the supporters of mere *Liberal-Labour* working-class representation. It is all very well for Ben Tillett to tell a recent Trades Union Congress that " The foundations of the Labour Party are in the Trades Union movement—no Trades Union movement, no Labour Party ; no Trades Union Congress, no Labour Government " ; but this is only half-true. The Trades Union Congress was most reluctant to beget an independent child. Tillett himself was one who, at the time which I am describing, did much to convert the Trades Unions to Socialist politics. But the man most responsible for the change from old-fashioned " Lib-Labism " was James Keir Hardie.

Keir Hardie was a freak. Born in Lanarkshire in utter poverty, he worked underground in the mines until he was twenty-three, when he organized the Ayrshire Miners' Union. Discovering in himself unsuspected powers of emotional rhetoric,

he became a vigorous adherent of Socialism and, with the simple eyes of fanatical faith, saw further into the future than the mass of politicians. A mixture of prophet, juggler and autocrat, he lived to become the most remarkable figure in the early political rise of British Socialism ; to force upon the House of Commons the realization that a new force had risen in the constituencies ; to merge the platitudes of Socialist and Trades Union platforms into an independent Party ; and thus, incidentally, to launch Philip Snowden on his remarkable career.

The first Trades Union Congress which Hardie attended was that of 1887. He took the opportunity to attack Broadhurst, the secretary of its Parliamentary Committee, for voting against the Miners' Eight Hours Bill. His protest was overwhelmingly defeated, but Hardie had inserted the thin edge of the wedge of revolt against " Lib-Labism." At the next annual Congress, at Bradford, he joined with Tom Mann and a handful of other delegates in an unsuccessful private attempt to form an independent political party. In the same year he stood as an " Independent Labour " candidate at the Mid-Lanarkshire bye-election, in opposition to Liberal-Labour candidates approved by the Labour Electoral Association, which was the later form of the old Labour Electoral Committee, now more or less independent of its parent,

the Trades Union Congress. Undeterred by defeat, Hardie in 1889 succeeded in forming a Scottish Labour Party at Glasgow, with Cunninghame Graham as its president. While this group was of no great importance in itself, it proved to be the forerunner of another and a greater organization.

The time was ripe. Widespread strikes were taking place. One of the most remarkable was the London dock strike, when John Burns and Ben Tillett led a very effective propagandist campaign on behalf of the dockers. Hitherto Trades Unionism had been the preserve of the better-paid and more skilled trades; but now the "New Unionism" began to organize the masses of unskilled and semi-skilled labourers. One natural result of this outburst of "direct action" was to dilute the "Lib-Lab" sentiments of the Trades Union Congress, and to amplify the desire for independent Labour representation in Parliament. Indeed, the Congress of 1891 admitted that "a strong and vigorous Labour Party" in Parliament was necessary to ensure industrial reform.

Then, as now, however, Trades Union Congresses had a partiality for voting pious resolutions without taking steps to carry them out. Hardie, therefore, moved an amendment in favour of raising a Parliamentary fund by the Trades Unions "to secure Labour Representation based upon the

decisions of this Congress" ; and further sought to add to the words "a strong and vigorous Labour Party" the important qualification "*independent of Party politics*." Both his amendments were defeated, but it is significant that a third of the Congress voted for the second.

Meanwhile local Socialist bodies became more and more eager to nominate Socialist candidates for Parliamentary and municipal elections. In the ten years after 1882 the number of working-men on local elective bodies rose from twelve to over two hundred. In London a Trades Council Labour Representation League was formed ; in Bradford, a Bradford and District Labour Union ; in the Colne Valley and at Salford also, Socialists toyed with the idea of independent candidates. The Bradford body invited Bernard Shaw to stand for East Bradford at the General Election of 1892. His refusal was in terms which could only stimulate those whom he disappointed. "I have over and over again said," wrote Mr. Shaw, "that, until the workers learn to trust one another, and choose one another as representatives, instead of running after tall hats and frock-coats, they will never have a genuine Labour Party in Parliament."

The 1892 General Election was remarkable for the appearance of three independent working-men Members in the House of Commons. Keir Hardie

was triumphantly returned for South-West Ham and, escorted by a large body of his constituents, with appropriate music, took his seat in a workman's cap and muffler. He had fought a straight fight against a Tory candidate and, though stressing his independence of the Liberal Party, had received considerable Radical support. John Burns had also been victorious, at Battersea, over a Tory ; and had refused the nomination of the Battersea Liberals. The third independent, Havelock Wilson, of the Seamen and Firemen's Union, had beaten both a Liberal and a Liberal-Unionist at Middlesbrough. Twelve Liberal-Labour Trades Unionists were elected ; and Mr. Cunninghame Graham, standing as one of eight candidates of the Scottish Labour Party, was successful at Camlachie, in Glasgow.

At the Trades Union Congress in this year, Hardie pressed once more for a levy upon the Trades Unions to support independent Labour members in Parliament. He made a little progress : the Congress instructed its Parliamentary Committee to draft a scheme of this nature which should operate "until such time as payment of members is granted." At the next annual Congress Hardie's victory was nearly won. The Congress decided to establish a political fund and not to support any candidate except those who stood for "the collective ownership and control of the means

of production, distribution and exchange." But no decision was made as to how the proposed fund should be raised ; the Liberal-Labour men defeated Hardie's proposal for the formation of an independent Parliamentary group, and objected strongly to the Congress being " manipulated by Socialist tendencies and Socialist societies."

But Hardie had already busied himself in bringing together the various Socialist groups in the country who favoured independent Parliamentary action.

In January, 1893, shortly before the Congress just described, he founded the Independent Labour Party—so well known to-day as the " I.L.P."—at the Labour Institute, Peckover Street, Bradford. Delegates were present from various Socialist societies. Some were glad to merge their groups in the new organization. Others, like the Fabian Society (one of whose delegates was Bernard Shaw) and the Social Democratic Federation, expressed sympathy with its aims but refused to coalesce with it. Apart from the personal dislike of Hyndman, their leader, for Keir Hardie, the Social Democrats did not consider the new body sufficiently revolutionary ; while the Fabians, unwilling to abandon their doctrine of universal permeation, held the exactly opposite view. The latter, however, were content to realize that the I.L.P. would, in fact,

wholeheartedly accept and spread the Fabian doctrines.

The meeting was in two minds whether to call the new society the " Independent Labour Party " or the " Socialist Labour Party." Ben Tillett argued against the word " Socialist," as likely to antagonize innumerable Trades Unionists who, though Socialists in reality, might not wish to proclaim themselves. His argument prevailed, and the other title was chosen.

(It is not without interest that, in later years, attempts have been made to show that this was not the first time that the title of " Independent Labour Party " had been adopted. At Bradford two years previously, after a serious quarrel between Liberals and Socialists over a strike in the Manningham Mills, a group of local Socialists had resolved that " It is only through the agency of an *independent labour party* that the working people will be able to work out their own salvation," and printed notices with the heading : " Independent Labour Party : Bradford and District Labour Union." Nor, it seems, were these enthusiasts alone in their choice ; for, a few weeks before, an ardent Socialist had lectured to the Deptford Liberal Club on " The Need for an Independent Labour Party.")

Such, then, was the origin of the Independent Labour Party which Philip Snowden joined at

Cowling in 1894. Its aim was "The collective ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange; its methods, the capture of the House of Commons by independent Labour representatives. Its present social and industrial programme includes the eight hour day; the abolition of overtime; provision for the aged and disabled; universal free education; work for the unemployed; taxation of unearned income; arbitration, and disarmament." It undertook to support candidates only on the conditions that they accepted its full programme and that, if elected to the House of Commons, they would sit in opposition to the Government of the day, "no matter which Party is in power."

Thus was formed the Independent Labour Party, in which the first thirty-three years of Snowden's political life were to be passed. Until his break with it in 1927, he was one of the proudest of its members, ascribing the "growing class-consciousness of the people" to its pioneer work of propaganda.

He once set out the basis of its appeal and its place in the Labour Movement. There was no reason, he claimed, why Socialists and Trades Unionists should not work together; and very many reasons why they should. Naturally, an enlightened Trades Unionist would cease to be

either Liberal or Tory as soon as he joined the Independent Labour Party; but the Trades Unions would continue to exercise their natural functions, just as the Independent Labour Party would continue to preach Socialism. The bridge between the two bodies was the necessity of Labour's political independence. The duty of the I.L.P. was to persuade Trades Unionists, and the working-class as a whole, that social democracy was the necessary and ideal sequel of political democracy.

Eager to exercise its functions in the Labour Movement, the Independent Labour Party nominated two candidates at Parliamentary bye-elections: Frank Smith at Sheffield, and Joseph Burgess at Leicester. Both were unsuccessful. In the following year, 1895, it ran twenty-eight candidates at the General Election. Snowden, as we have seen, was to have been its candidate at Keighley, but could not raise the funds. Keir Hardie stood at South-West Ham; Ben Tillett at West Bradford; James Sexton at Ashton-under-Lyne; J. Ramsay MacDonald—who, like Snowden, had joined the Party in the previous year, and was destined to play an equally important rôle in its future—at Southampton; Dr. Pankhurst at Gorton; S. G. Hobson at East Bristol; and Tom Mann in the Colne Valley.

Every one of these was defeated; but John

Burns and Havelock Wilson held Battersea and Middlesbrough, and found ten Liberal-Labour working-men beside them in the House. During this campaign Burns bitterly attacked both the Independent Labour Party and the Social Democratic Federation, calling the latter "factious, fanatical, intolerant, suspicious and ignorantly impracticable," and denouncing Keir Hardie, the chairman of the Independent Labour Party, as an unscrupulous demagogue. "So anxious," said Burns, with perhaps unconscious humour, "are these Socialists to reach the Millennium, that they are ready to sacrifice each other on the road."

No wonder that Snowden at this moment, when the Labour Movement seemed united on political action yet hopelessly divided on the question of tactics, declared in a speech at Keighley that he and his fellow-Socialists must change their methods. They must dispense, he said, with the vigorous denunciation of opponents which, necessary though it might have been in the past, had now served its purpose. They must demonstrate to the world the advantages, the necessity and the practicability of Socialism. They must make fewer speeches to please their own coteries, and put forward more arguments to convert the unconverted.

STEPNEY PUBLIC LONDON LIBRARIES

CHAPTER IV

SNOWDEN was not discouraged by the collapse of his candidature at Keighley. Not only had he become by far the most popular Socialist speaker within twenty miles of his home, but, entering his name on the Independent Labour Party's list of "Social Reform Lecturers," he spoke every week-end under its auspices, travelling from end to end of the Kingdom. The work entailed long and tiresome train journeys; almost perpetual physical discomfort; and contact, not always congenial, with thousands of new acquaintances. He spent evening after evening, when his lecture was over, in cheap temperance hotels, or in workmen's cottages, smoking and, if possible, swapping Yorkshire stories with the less emotional of his companions.

Regarding his labours as a crusade, he was stirred by the responsiveness of his hearers. There could be no greater joy in life, he once wrote of these early years, than to pass from group to group, grasping the hands of men and women whose faces were aglow with the enthusiasm of the Cause. He

saw no reason why the preaching of Socialism should be anything but joyous ; it might be a serious work in which they were engaged ; but that was no reason why they should wear sombre garb and sour expressions.

He set himself to study the idiosyncrasies of audiences in various parts of the country, attuning the form of his appeal to their likes and dislikes. Most difficult of all, he said not too seriously, was a Halifax audience. He had seen his "most rhetorical, blood-curdling, back-creeping oratorical flights" fall as flatly and unresponsively on them "as a mackerel on a fishmonger's slab." So, he tells us, he decided one evening upon revenge. He spoke on the unemployed, setting out fact after fact, figure after figure, analysis after analysis, unrelieved by any brightness of phrase, or by any appeal to his listeners' humour, their indignation, or their pity. For the first hour and a half of this grim discourse, he flattered himself that they were withering under the weight of his words. Then, to his sudden awe, he realized that they were actually enjoying the experience ; his plot had gone awry. The drier his facts, the more unrelieved the dullness of his statistics, the more this Halifax audience delighted in his speech.

He had the advantage of making a different impression on the people who met and heard him,

from that usually produced by Socialist lecturers. He was unlike the majority of those florid, sentimental tub-thumpers. When Snowden mounted a platform to speak, the audience was astonished at the contrast between his modest appearance, frail, white-faced and tight-lipped, and the fire and liveliness of his utterances. He was always very plainly dressed, though neatly ; but to unintelligent strangers he must sometimes have looked rather like a clerk just discharged from hospital after an accident. His appearance displayed none of that air of authority which he now possesses.

At the end of a most serious speech, he would suddenly spring one of his favourite Yorkshire anecdotes on the listeners, such as the one about the man who boasts to his friends in a public-house that, unlike them, he is not in the least dominated by his wife ; he has only to stamp his foot to make her do whatever he wishes. At this moment she enters the bar, and proceeds to abuse him and drag him away. " Stamp thy foot, lad ; stamp thy foot ! " shout his friends. It was not difficult for Snowden to draw a political moral from this story.

With him in its ranks, the Independent Labour Party continued to fight elections of every kind—local, municipal and Parliamentary. Keir Hardie was defeated at East Bradford in 1896, and Tom

Mann at North Aberdeen in the same year ; in the next, at Halifax, three prominent working-men Members of Parliament opposed Mann, one of them, Havelock Wilson, going so far as to say that " It is the duty of all Liberal-Labour men to fight Tom Mann and his friends." In every direction now the Independent Labour Party had to face opposition. Apart from the hostility of the Conservative and Liberal Parties and the Liberal-Labour group, the other Socialist societies attacked it. Robert Blatchford, who became the head of the *Clarion* newspaper and preached a lively form of revolutionary Socialism, denounced it as a " one-man show." The Social Democratic Federation resented its claims. The Fabians—the " Gas and Water Socialists," as they were called—were supercilious in their sympathy. And even inside the party there was dissension. In the spring of 1898 the Cowling branch passed a resolution that the Council of the Independent Labour Party should be elected, not, as heretofore, by its annual conference, but by all the members of the party throughout the country, divided into six constituencies. This, however, came to nothing.

In the summer of that year Snowden made a decision which powerfully influenced his future. He moved from Cowling to the neighbouring town of Keighley. The National Administrative Council

of the Independent Labour Party happened to meet there on July 1st and 2nd ; and one of its members, Pete Curran, resigned on the ground that his time was too busily occupied in organizing the Gas-workers' Union. Another "I.L.P.'er" was co-opted to the vacant place, as having come first among the unsuccessful candidates for election at the previous annual conference. He, however, did not accept the new responsibility, which was then offered to Snowden. Thus, barely four years after joining the Socialist Movement, Snowden rose to a national position in what was already its most prominent organization. From the summer of 1898 until the present day, he has never ceased to be in the forefront of British Socialism.

At the same time he took over the editorship of the *Keighley Labour Journal*, a monthly broadsheet which claimed to be the oldest local Labour periodical in the country. It had for some time been published from hand to mouth—and, by virtue of small donations from local sympathisers, distributed free of charge—under the editorship of G. J. Wardle, a railway clerk on the Midland Railway, who had now been appointed to edit the newly-established *Railway Review*, the organ of the railwaymen's Trades Unions. In Snowden's regime the *Keighley Labour Journal* was published weekly at the price of a halfpenny a copy. He remained

editor for two years, until he left Keighley, after which the *Journal* relapsed into monthly publication and eventually perished at the end of 1902.

He also stood with success for the Keighley Town Council and the School Board. During his five years' experience of local administrative work at Cowling and Keighley he fought seven elections and was never defeated.

His popularity with the Independent Labour Party grew swiftly. At the annual conference in 1899, Keir Hardie was, as usual, elected chairman, and the first four places for the Administrative Council were filled as follows :

J. Bruce Glasier - - -	95
Philip Snowden - - -	89
Russell Smart - - -	86
J. Ramsay MacDonald - -	85

It is interesting to know that at this time, six years after its foundation, the Independent Labour Party had 263 branches and groups in the Kingdom ; but, it was reported to the conference, while 105 had paid their affiliation fees and sent reports on their work during the previous year, eight had sent reports but no fees, and no fewer than 138 had sent neither reports nor fees. The income of the Party, except from such exceptional sources as election appeals, rarely reached £50 a month.

Keir Hardie, backed by Snowden and the others, continued his struggle to make the Trades Union Congress accept the idea of Labour representation in Parliament separate from both the old parties. Victory fell to him at last at the Congress of 1899, which passed the following clumsy but fateful resolution : " This Congress, having regard to the decisions of former years, and with a view to securing a better representation of the interests of Labour in the House of Commons, hereby instructs its Parliamentary Committee to invite the co-operation of all Co-operative, Socialistic, Trades Union and other working-class organizations, to jointly co-operate on lines mutually agreed upon in convening a special congress of representatives from such of the above-named organizations as may be willing to take part, to devise ways and means for the securing of an increased number of Labour Members in the next Parliament."

The result of this resolution was to bring into existence the Labour Representation League, the direct forerunner of the present Labour Party. Ramsay Macdonald was appointed to draft a constitution for the new body ; and with the aid of various other prominent Socialists, including Bernard Shaw, he gave it a form to which it is still faithful in the main.

The League was born at a conference held in

February, 1900, at the Memorial Hall, London, which was attended by delegates representing about half the Trades Unions affiliated to the Trades Union Congress, and some seventy thousand Socialists belonging to the Independent Labour Party and other bodies. The conference discussed a motion in favour of " the working-classes being represented in the House of Commons by members of the working-class, as being the most likely to be sympathetic with the aims and demands of the Labour Movement." John Burns objected that this was too narrow and exclusive ; he was weary, he said, of talk about " working-class boots, working-class trains, working-class houses and working-class margarine," and hoped that the new Party would not remain " prisoners to class prejudice " by insisting on putting forward working-men candidates only. He won his point. An attempt by the Social Democratic Federation, on the other hand, to fasten " the recognition of the Class War " on the new Party was defeated. Keir Hardie, emphasising his victory, moved successfully that the new Party should act as an independent body in Parliament, with its own chairman and its own Whips. At the same time, he said he would not object to occasional co-operation with any other Party which was promoting legislation in the direct interests of Labour ; his desire, he explained, was

to prevent electoral contests between the new Party's nominees and "earnest Trades Union candidates who were nominally Liberals."

The conference decided to appoint an executive of twelve members, representing the Trades Union Congress, the Independent Labour Party, the Social Democratic Federation, and the Fabian Society. This executive was to select candidates, summon annual conferences, and administer the Party's funds, as well as to present annual reports on its work to the various sections of the Movement represented on it. Each affiliated group was to pay an annual fee of ten shillings for every thousand members, and also to be responsible for the political expenses of its own candidates. The last clause was inserted to reassure the wealthier groups that the others would not take advantage of them.

An attempt was made to call the new party the "Liberal Party," on the ground that it alone represented true Liberalism. This was defeated and, instead, the title of "Labour Representation Committee" was adopted. Ramsay MacDonald became its secretary, and began to apply his remarkable powers of adroitness and compromise to steer it through the many dangers and weaknesses which threatened its early career.

The divergence of views which, though glossed

over, had become plainly evident at this conference, did not soon die down. Snowden returned from a visit to Inverness, where he had addressed an isolated Socialist group, to assist his colleagues on the council of the Independent Labour Party which passed a resolution that " In view of the accusations of treachery against the delegates of the Independent Labour Party at the recent united Labour conference, the National Administrative Council can hold no relations with the executive of the Social Democratic Federation until all such imputations have been withdrawn." Everyone knew that the I.L.P.'s differences with the Social Democrats would never disappear so long as Hardie and Hyndman led the two rival societies.

Meanwhile the *Keighley Labour Journal* became involved in a controversy with Sir John Brunner, M.P., in regard to the conditions of employment at the latter's works, where, the *Journal* complained, no one under the age of thirty could hope to obtain employment. This, so far as it was correct, Sir John Brunner protested, was due wholly to the fact that the conditions of labour at the Brunner Mond works were so excellent—with an eight-hours day, a week's holiday on full pay every year, a cricket ground, a bicycle track, a football field, a bowling green, tennis courts, schools, and " a pavilion in course of erection " ; his employees

sought, in consequence, to obtain all the vacancies for their sons, thus restricting the employment of young men from outside. The *Journal* retorted tartly that " The case of Brunner Mond & Co. is a standing illustration, well-known to all economic students, of the big advantage to the employer of the fair treatment of workmen. Big dividends can be made more easily by using a monopoly to charge the public excessive prices, than by slave-driving workpeople."

In the summer of this year, 1900, Snowden abandoned Keighley and its municipal politics and returned to Cowling, his birthplace. But this was only a step towards his entrance into a larger political field. Lord Salisbury's Government, gratified by the relief of Mafeking and the apparently successful outcome of the Boer War, sprang a " Khaki Election " on the country.

The temper in which it appealed to the electorate may be gauged, not too unfairly, from the election address of Sir Elliott Lees, the Conservative candidate for Birkenhead. This consisted of a one-word telegram : " Pretoria."

The Independent Labour Party, in common with other Socialist bodies, bitterly opposed the Boer War. At the outbreak the I.L.P. executive, with Snowden as a prominent member, had issued this manifesto : " In view of the terrible sacrifice of

life, widespread suffering, and the enormous destruction of property, which the present war has entailed, and must further entail if it is prosecuted to the bitter end, we recommend that the Governments of Great Britain and the South African Republic should at once declare the terms of peace that would be acceptable to them, so that it would be possible for either Government by the acceptance of them, now or at any time during the course of the War, to bring hostilities to a close. We believe that such a decision would be in harmony with the proposal agreed to at the recent Peace Conference at The Hague ; that it would be approved by the people of our own and every other civilized land, and that, in addition to probably bringing a speedy end to the present war, it would form a precedent that might save this and other countries from the disaster of war in the future."

The financial resources of the Independent Labour Party, however, and of the newly formed Labour Representation Committee upon which it was so prominently represented, were not so strong as its words. Nor had the Committee had time to give sufficient consideration to a choice of candidates, or be able to take a serious part in the election. The Independent Labour Party, nevertheless, made itself responsible for nine candidates ; accepted joint responsibility with the Social Democratic

Federation for another ; and declared itself favourably disposed towards two more. One of its official candidates was Snowden at Blackburn.

This constituency possessed two seats in the House of Commons, and had been solidly represented by Tories ever since 1885. The two Tory candidates for the 1900 election were the sitting members, Sir William Henry Hornby and Sir William Coddington, proudly known to their supporters as " the Blackburn baronets." The second had the special qualification, in a constituency containing many working-class votes, of having " once worn his clogs." The Liberals did not propose to nominate a candidate, seeing no hope of winning a seat in the prevailing war conditions. It seemed ridiculous for a Socialist to stand, though Blackburn had four Socialists upon its Town Council, and two on its Board of Guardians ; apart from the Mafeking atmosphere, local feeling about Socialism may be judged from an incident which occurred only a week before the election campaign opened. A public brawl took place in which certain Town Councillors were involved ; when the case came into court, one of these bitterly accused another of saying, " You are often charging us Socialists with being lazy, and with being guilty of free love and starving our wives. This charge

fits *you*, if the accounts are true which I have heard from your brother-in-law."

In August, however, Snowden accepted the invitation of the Blackburn branches of the Independent Labour Party and the Social Democratic Federation to stand as their candidate in the election.

The contest promised—and soon bore out this promise—to be excessively rough. It was marked by the crudest forms of electoral vulgarity. South Africa was far away ; few families had yet lost sons or brothers ; Lancashire had scarcely felt the effects of the war. Brass bands, Mafeking patriotism, the accumulated blatancy of nineteenth-century Jingoism—all were flung into the scale against the stranger who dared to uphold the Boers ; to attack the Jingoes ; to offer his Socialist, "Little England," teetotal, lower-middle-class programme to Blackburn stalwarts. But the very intensity of fury which Snowden roused among his opponents increased their curiosity about him.

His opening meeting was held in the second week of September at the Exchange Hall. There was not room for the huge crowd which came to hear him. Since this represents his first important political utterance, it deserves description, in order to show both the nature of his views at this time and the manner in which he presented them.

He began by declaring that the heartiness of his welcome made it unnecessary for him to make a long apology for appearing on the platform. Nevertheless, he continued, he was quite conscious of the disabilities under which he laboured ; for he was neither titled nor wealthy, and he had not enjoyed the advantage of a higher education. What knowledge and education he possessed, he had obtained under all those difficulties which were familiar to poor men in his audience who also had been inspired to improve themselves. It is clear that Snowden had learned much from his continuous round of week-end lectures and speeches, for, having thus gained the sympathy of his listeners, he proceeded to put them in a good humour with an anecdote of Johnson Fox, the Corn Law reformer. At a meeting Fox was addressing, Snowden told them, a baker was present who had been fined for selling short weight. At the conclusion of Fox's speech, the baker announced that he wished to ask a question : " I should like to ask Mr. Fox what has become of his wife." " Sir," replied Mr. Fox, " she has been weighed in the balance and found wanting ! "

Snowden allowed the laughter to die down. Then, " The justification for my candidature in Blackburn is that those men to whom you have hitherto entrusted your political interests,

have been weighed in the balance and found wanting."

The people of Blackburn, he went on, had had long and painful experience of what government of the poor by the rich, of the masses by the classes, meant. "I think the time has come when the poor should try to govern themselves and have faith in themselves. I have faith in the people. . . . The old saying that one half of the world does not know how the other half lives is literally true: a large proportion of the population is compelled to live in dwellings which no self-respecting wild beast would make its den." Landlordism was to blame for this; the claims of humanity demanded that the iniquitous system of private landlordism should cease. "And everything urged against private ownership in land can be applied with equal truth to the private ownership of other means of production."

Instead of permitting the people to be controlled by the Trusts, let the people control the Trusts. If industries which had reached the monopoly stage were taken over by the public and worked for the common good, the people would undoubtedly get a better article at a lower price. Improvements could only be effected in the condition of the working classes in so far as they removed the oppression of landlordism and capitalism. "The complete

control of industry by the people is the only complete remedy for social evils and inequalities."

Snowden announced himself in favour of adult suffrage—every man and every woman to have a vote ; the payment by the State of the Returning Officers' expenses at elections ; more equal electoral districts ; shorter Parliaments ; the alternative vote ; the payment of members ; a shorter working day ; and " the ending, not the mending, of that standing disgrace to the intelligence of the British people, a hereditary House of Lords." One question, he said, was unfortunately always with them—the drink question. He believed that Parliament should move in the matter and establish the public control of the drink traffic. He advocated also universal pensions for the aged and the disabled ; in the heavy taxation of the bloated incomes of the rich, the country had the means to provide funds for all these social reforms.

The war in South Africa had degraded the British Empire to the level of a commercial asset for the benefit of a gang of hybrid financiers. He declined to have his patriotism judged by the patriotism of Joseph Chamberlain. " I am a patriot. It is because I love my country and am jealous of her honour ; because I want to see her the home of freedom and the friend of small nationalities ; because I want to see her honoured and respected

for righteousness ; that I decline to approve a course of action which has indelibly stained our national honour and lowered our prestige among the nations of the world. . . . I am no 'Little Englander.' I am all for a great England. I want to see an England great in the health and happiness of its people, great in the strength of righteousness of its manhood, great in the virtue and beauty of its womanhood, great in the innocence and protection of its children, great in the splendour of its public works, great in its arts and literature. I wish to see a great England whose courageous sons shall leave her shores, not to the beating of the martial drum, but like David Livingstone who never shed one drop of human blood. I wish to see the adventurous sons of a great England go forth to win, by love and example, all those victories of Peace which are more renowned than War." (Tremendous cheering.)

Even in those days Snowden was not one to bask in the applause of his audience. Instantly he challenged them. " These are my ideals ; these are my principles. Whether they meet with your approval or not, they will not be altered to obtain your votes. I have no private ambition, nor have I any private aims to serve by this candidature. The poverty, ignorance, and suffering round us are most painful to me, and my only ambition is

that I may have an opportunity of taking a humble part in bringing more joy, more refinement and more happiness into the lives of the common people. I wish you to give me an opportunity to do this work. I know from experience your sufferings and struggles and needs. If I am returned as your representative, my knowledge of the toiling millions of my countrymen will ever be before my eyes as an inspiration to devote myself wholeheartedly to your service."

With a final appeal to his listeners to declare that no former ties of Party loyalty should any longer prevent them from doing their duty as husbands, as fathers and as men, Snowden sat down amidst uproarious applause.

Two questions were put to him. First, did he believe that men could be made perfect by Act of Parliament? "While I don't believe that Parliament can make all men angels, or earth a second Eden," Snowden replied, "I do believe that Parliament can be made to remove the causes of undeserved poverty, and to establish such social organizations that every man willing to work shall have work free from the bitter and unending toil which is now his lot."

Secondly, would he vote for the abolition of the monarchy? Snowden said that this question was not practical politics. "I do not believe in a

monarchy, but it would be a waste of energy to spend time in an agitation for its abolition. We have to strike at the institutions of which the monarchy is only a symbol."

This meeting proved that Snowden was indeed a live candidate, especially in the absence of other opposition to the Conservatives. It was impossible, of course, that he should win ; but he might do something to stem the tide of reaction in Blackburn. Men remembered what their fathers had told them of the uncompromising Radicalism of the old-time Chartists. Here, in Snowden, the true spirit of Chartist Radicalism was re-incarnated.

Young members of the local Radical club rallied to assist him. But Snowden was disappointed of some support upon which he had reckoned ; several Trades Union branches whom he asked to allow him an opportunity to address their members, refused on the ground that they were organized for industrial and not political purposes.

His appeal to the Radicals was frank. "I am not here to beg for your votes," he told them ; "I have nothing to gain by your votes. I put my principles in front of you ; and if you like them, you will support me. If you don't, you won't. I will thank no man to give me his vote unless he does so with an honest belief in my sincerity and in the conviction that, when returned to Parliament,

I shall stand by the pledges I have made before this constituency." He praised Gladstone, dead only two years before : " Surrounded as he was for nearly half a century with the corrupting influence of a political career, yet he kept himself unspotted by the world. I only hope that, on the day when the people of England leave the land of bondage for the Promised Land, they may find a leader who, to devotion to the cause of the common people, will add the ability, the knowledge, the purity and the eloquence of the Grand Old Man."

The Independent Labour Party sent him £166 13s. 4d. for his nomination fee, this being his share of the £500 required by the Returning Officer from the three candidates. Unexpected additional support for his campaign came from George Cadbury, the head of the cocoa firm, who sent Keir Hardie £500 towards the Independent Labour Party's election expenses ; of this Snowden received £100.

The more unscrupulous of his opponents were stung into crude personal attacks. Handbills were distributed : " Down with Snowden, Atheism, and Infidelity ! " Hooligans chalked on the walls such charges as " Snowden is an atheist," and " Snowden was dismissed from the Excise Service," to which some added, " for fraud." When his supporters urged him to publish a denial of these statements,

Snowden refused. "I am fighting this election on principles," he told them. "If principles can't win, I won't trouble to deny their silly lies."

His opponents pointed out on their platforms that he was not a local man, but an "interloper" and a "carpet-bagger." The kindest thing they said was that he was "a youth of the romantic Socialist type." One of them assured a delighted meeting that "Where Mr. Snowden comes from, I don't know. There is a certain bare mountain in Wales called Snowdon; whether the Socialist candidate is a chip of that or not, I don't know either. But I have been and seen it, and it is a very bare mountain; it produces nothing that is good."

Some of Snowden's meetings were broken up; but, when he obtained a hearing, he impressed every section of his audience with his power and sincerity. He made a dangerous experiment in holding a meeting on a Sunday, which seemed to give point to the charge of atheism. But he comforted his hearers with the statement that "I believe I am doing a work as good, as holy, as truly religious as that which is being done by any Christian minister in the land to-day."

After this challenge to the Sabbatarians, he told an anxious inquirer: "I am a Wesleyan. I look at the religious question from an academic point of

view. I am not in favour of a State-established Church, for I favour absolute religious freedom." As a powerful counterblast to the charge of atheism, he published a letter from a clergyman in a neighbouring district, who declared that, although himself a Liberal and an active supporter of the Liberal candidate in his own constituency, he would, if he had twenty votes in Snowden's, give them all to him as a man who was certain to raise the moral tone of the House of Commons.

And an anonymous correspondent, signing himself "Wesleyan," wrote to the chief local paper that he would vote for Snowden, "if spared," because, "Speaking as a Wesleyan, I look upon him as a preacher of righteousness. He is a power for good. He is straightforward and fearless. I cannot help admiring him. It will give me unbounded joy to see him returned on Tuesday."

Snowden did not take all the attacks on him without occasionally retorting upon his opponents. In answering a question, for example, as to how the payment of members would benefit the community, he pointed out that Sir William Coddington had voted in only one out of every six divisions in the last Parliament. "Shame," cried his audience. "Why do you call 'shame'?" Snowden asked. "What Sir William Coddington does is no business of yours."

At another meeting he quoted Mr. Balfour's boast that the Tory Government had given the country five and a half years of sober social reform. "If I believed that," he commented, "I should prefer never to be sober again in my life."

Polling-day came on October 2nd, only three and a half weeks after his entrance into the constituency: 19,496 voters were on the register; each had two votes. In the previous election, five years before, the two Conservative baronets had polled over nine thousand votes, with the Liberal candidate far behind them, with 6,840. With no Liberal in the field, it was thought that this time many Liberal votes would go to swell the Conservative majority, though it was conceded that Snowden's eloquence might possibly win him the support of a few Radicals. He was expected, however, to poll an insignificant and humiliating total.

Some of his more ardent supporters left work a week before the election, in order to devote all their time to his cause. Many of these refused to go to bed on the eve of the poll, and worked through the night at his committee-rooms. "Vote straight for the two owd 'uns," was the baronets' slogan. They even had the use of a motor-car, an almost unknown form of vehicle in those days, to encourage their supporters. "Never mind the

two owd 'uns ; vooat straight for t' young 'un," was Snowden's appeal.

The result was declared the same evening, as follows :

Elected	Sir W. H. Hornby -	11,247
	Sir W. Coddington	9,415
	Philip Snowden -	7,096

No fewer than 16,757 voters had polled out of 19,496. Of these, 5,335 had voted for Snowden alone ; 1,700 had cast one of their votes for him and one for Hornby ; and 61 for him and Coddington. His total was not merely several thousands more than anybody expected, but it was incomparably the largest total ever cast for an independent Socialist candidate in an English constituency. It was a triumph for him ; and a presage for the future.

As is customary on such occasions, Snowden publicly congratulated his opponents at the declaration of the poll. But at a meeting of his own supporters, he declared that he had never seen an election in which the opponents of Socialism had manifested less intelligence and mental capacity. "If I had been as short of brains as they have proved themselves to be, and if I had as much money as they, I should have bought brains to do the work for me."

With characteristic defiance he reminded his listeners that he had not trimmed. He had not pleaded for Liberal votes, nor stood as a teetotaller or a Home Ruler. He had offered himself with clearly announced principles, and had told the voters, "You can either take them, or you can leave them."

CHAPTER V

APART from Snowden's triumphant failure, the Independent Labour Party had considerable reason for satisfaction with its candidates at the 1900 General Election. Keir Hardie was returned for Merthyr Tydvil with 5,745 votes, a majority of 1,741. He had also been nominated for Preston, where he polled 4,834. No other I.L.P. candidate was successful, but at West Bradford, F. W. Jowett, polling 4,949 votes, was beaten by only forty-one. The votes cast for the other Independent Labour Party candidates are worth recording :

J. Ramsay MacDonald	Leicester	4,164
James Parker	Halifax	3,276
A. E. Fletcher	Camlachie	3,107
F. Brocklehurst	South-West Manchester	2,398
James Johnston	Ashton-under-Lyne	734

The joint I.L.P. and Social Democratic Federation candidate at Rochdale, C. Allan Clarke, polled 901.

The two Social Democratic Federation candidates whom the I.L.P. had agreed to bless, George Lansbury at Bow and Bromley, and Will Thorne at South-West Ham, had received 2,558 and 4,439 votes respectively.

There was a vast difference between these impressive totals and the miserable twenties and thirties which former Socialist candidates had polled. In addition, John Burns held Battersea with 5,860 votes ; and Richard Bell, of the railwaymen, won Derby, as a Liberal-Labour candidate, with 7,640.

The new Labour Representation Committee met, therefore, in a spirit of elation a few months after the election. Things were going well for Labour representation in Parliament. A scheme for a political levy on the Trades Unions, prepared by the Fabian Society, was, however, rejected as premature ; the Trade Unionists were not yet ready to accept the inevitable. The Committee had also to accept the resignation of the delegates of the Social Democratic Federation, as a protest against the Committee's refusal to recognize the " Class War " in its programme.

But this loss could hardly be considered serious ; these extremists were no real help to any practical movement. Snowden, invited about this time to express himself on the advisability of fusion between the Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party, replied that this was a task

for the rank and file, and not for the leaders, of the two groups. He himself, he said, always did his best to promote harmony between their respective branches in towns which he visited.

While the Labour Representation Committee was slowly setting itself upon its feet—and hampering itself by its refusal to appeal to the Trades Unions for adequate funds—the Independent Labour Party, which in the seven years of its existence had contracted a debt of £310, was busy in the constituencies. Now that Keir Hardie's time was largely occupied in the House of Commons, Snowden became the I.L.P.'s most prominent public speaker. He continued to address meetings all over the country, and succeeded in converting many undefined Socialist groups into branches of the I.L.P. The scope of his addresses may be gathered from a list of some of their titles: "The Evolution of Socialism"; "Should Christians be Socialists"; "The Christ that is to Be"; "The Social Side of Christ's Teaching"; "The Future of the Independent Labour Party"; "After Ten Years"; and "A Backward Glance o'er Travelled Paths." He also spoke, of course, on current political topics, especially on the Taxation of Land Values. In addition, he pugnaciously sought public debates with prominent speakers of other Parties.

Thus he debated on "Liberalism or Socialism—

Which ? " with A. B. Markham, in the Town Hall of Sutton-in-Ashfield, for which Markham was the Liberal Member of Parliament. " Giving the Liberal Party every credit for its good intentions, the record of its achievements during the last seventy years condemns it as utterly incapable," said Snowden. " There are in the House of Commons to-day fewer independent representatives of the working-classes than had a place in the un-Reformed Parliament." Mr. Markham had said that half a loaf is better than none. " I wish to ask him if he is prepared to argue that half a pair of trousers is better than none. We got the first half long ago, and we are waiting now for the other half." The first half, of course, was the vote.

Snowden's brain, remarked a member of one of his audiences, " is packed with ice. What a striking example he offers of what Will can do to overcome Misfortune." But another said that Snowden reminded him of " a very angry but very anæmic curate."

A similar debate with Mr. Tomkinson, the Liberal Member of Parliament for Crewe, was remarkable, in that, after Snowden's first speech, his opponent appealed for mercy. " If the debate," said Mr. Tomkinson, " is to be a contest of eloquence, it will be a bad look-out for me." He went on, somewhat plaintively, to suggest that

Snowden had pictured the state of the country in too black colours ; there was surely no need for dissension between Liberals and Socialists. Were they not fighting for the same ends, against the same Tory opponents ? This conventional line of argument was called by Snowden, " The old Union-of-the-Progressive-Forces trick."

He debated also with William Pearson, a leading light of the United Kingdom Alliance, the principal British Temperance association, on two successive evenings at Burnley. The subject of the first debate was, " Is Prohibition by means of the Local Veto worthy of the support of Temperance reformers ? " Snowden took the negative view ; and, on the following evening, put forward his own theory of Temperance reform, arguing for the municipalization of the liquor traffic.

Snowden's views on Temperance Reform never altered until Prohibition was introduced into America after the War. A total abstainer himself, his sympathies were always with the reformers, but he never accepted their extremer proposals. He insisted, with obvious regret, that " There is no short cut to universal abstinence." Yet alcoholic drink, in his view, enfeebled the physical strength of the working-classes ; sapped their intelligence and independence ; ruined their self-respect ; lowered their ideals ; enheartened them to endure poverty

and filth ; made them fall victims to the " unscrupulous exploiters " who batten upon them. One did not need, he argued, to be a fanatical teetotaller to see that drink was one of the greatest curses which afflict mankind to-day. Not averse to drawing a political moral from this jeremiad, Snowden, while claiming for the Labour Party a higher proportion of total abstainers than any other political group in the country, once remarked pleasantly that drunkenness, like the other " vices of the poor, even to their Toryism," has come down to them from the classes above.

State Prohibition, however, in his earlier view, was not likely to be effective ; experiments so far made, under more favourable conditions than were likely to obtain in England, had not been encouraging to reformers. Where then did the solution lie ? Clearly, Snowden used to say, in removing the incentive of private gain from the drink traffic. He regarded the politician's interest in increasing the sale of drink as the chief difficulty in the way of regulating drunkenness. To the objection of the Prohibitionists that municipalization would implicate every citizen in the unholy drink traffic, Snowden retorted that every citizen was already implicated. No one who enjoyed the benefits of citizenship ought to forget, even if himself a teetotaller, that drink made the largest

individual contribution to the revenue. Temperance reformers, he argued, could not avoid responsibility for the drink traffic by refusing to control it; indeed, by neglecting their immediate duty, they became morally responsible for the consequences of their neglect.

It is pleasant to note that, even in the gloomiest days of Licensing Bill discussions, Snowden, unlike so many Temperance advocates, never lost his sense of humour. He cheered listeners with an anecdote of the Temperance fanatic who reminded a restless audience of the rich man in the Bible who, falling into Hell, besought Abraham to let Lazarus cool his tongue with water: "Yes, my friends," ranted the lecturer, "that rich man in his agony of thirst did not ask for whisky, whisky, whisky, or for beer, beer, beer; he asked for water—*water*—WATER! What does this show us, my friends?" He paused dramatically; and the answer came from the body of the hall: "It shows us where teetotallers go to."

I shall show later how, and why, Snowden's views on Temperance Reform changed. There is no need to follow him further at this point upon this dry, if (as has just been shown) not wholly cheerless, path.

In February, 1902, the death of Lord Fitzwilliam raised his grandson, Lord Milton, to the House of

Lords, and caused a Parliamentary vacancy at Wakefield. In 1895 the new earl, standing as a Tory, had polled 2,864 votes against the 2,165 cast for his Liberal opponent ; in 1900 he was returned unopposed.

The Wakefield Conservative Association selected Alderman Brotherton, a local chemical manufacturer and a "veritable captain of commerce," to represent it at the bye-election. The Liberals decided to abstain. A meeting of the Wakefield branch of the Independent Labour Party was held in the saloon of the Corn Exchange ; Keir Hardie, Bruce Glasier, F. W. Jowett and Philip Snowden attended, and Snowden was put forward as the prospective candidate.

Various questions were put to him, in order to define his platform. One of them was, "Are you in favour of the King being advised to give up his race-horses ?" To this Snowden instantly replied that, while this seemed to him scarcely a matter concerning his candidature, he had not the slightest objection to anyone's advising the King to give up his race-horses !

It was a strange fight between Brotherton and Snowden. The former, with an eye on the thousand miners who had votes in the constituency, stole a clap of Snowden's thunder by declaring himself in favour of the Miners' Eight Hours Bill.

Snowden declared himself thus : " In politics I am a Democrat ; in industrial affairs a Collectivist " ; and added, " I would give to Ireland and to the other nations of the United Kingdom the full control of their national affairs."

The Conservatives, as at Blackburn, complained that Snowden was " a Socialist carpet-bagger." A contemporary and not very friendly description represented him as " a man of medium height, with clean-cut features and a peculiar trick of holding his head sideways. His gestures are frequent and elaborate ; sometimes it is merely an extending motion of the arms ; sometimes he forgets himself and shakes his fist violently. Sometimes he folds his arms and tries the effect of pathos, but more generally his actions and, indeed, his whole bearing suggest a determined aggressiveness. Now and again he leers, then smiles in a pitying, sarcastic manner."

One of the sons of the Bishop of Ripon appeared on Brotherton's platform and compared the Conservative candidate's career advantageously with Snowden's. To this the latter retorted that, while he admired the Bishop of Ripon, " If we are to apply his son's doctrine of success to Christianity, I am prepared to admit that the Bishop, with a salary of £4,000 a year, has, judged by that standard, been a greater worldly success than his humble

Master, the Carpenter of Nazareth." "Encore, lad," shouted an admirer; and his chairman announced that Snowden would be "a credit both to Wakefield and to Yorkshire, for he can hold his own in front of any man. Mr. James Ramsay MacDonald, of the L.C.C., has written that he will come down later; the Keighley Trades and Labour Council have given Mr. Snowden a testimony of character; and the Amalgamated Railway Servants at Doncaster have sent fifty shillings towards his election expenses." Moreover, it was stated, a sum of money remaining from his Blackburn election funds of two years before had been placed to the credit of the Wakefield branch of the Independent Labour Party.

Snowden declared himself in favour of a wide extension of educational facilities. There should be no School Board rate, he said, but the money for education should come "from the pockets of the idle rich." On the strength of this utterance he has sometimes been credited with coining the phrase, "The idle rich."

His support was not wholly confined to Socialists. Dr. Macnamara brought him a letter from twenty Liberal Members of Parliament, favouring his candidature, and read it to a meeting. An incident which was to have an unpleasant sequel was the visit of Richard Bell, the railwaymen's Liberal-

Labour M.P., who claimed afterwards that he had brought "Liberal gold" to Snowden for his campaign, which had been eagerly accepted. But in point of fact, this "gold" consisted of only a couple of sovereigns, which Bell had been requested by two Liberal Members of Parliament to hand to Snowden's agent.

An American millionaire, afterwards well known in English Labour circles, Joseph Fels, of Pittsburg, also supported him. A crank on the subject of the taxation of land values, Fels was eager to see an English election. His approval of Snowden took the practical form of a cheque for £20 towards the campaign expenses, and the loan of what must have been the only motor-car in Wakefield. Mr. Brotherton, on the other hand, had to content himself with what his chief supporter in the press described as "a barouche of superlative neatness, drawn by two finely conditioned horses."

Mrs. Pankhurst, soon to lead the Women's Suffrage demonstrations, but on this occasion known only as "a winsome-looking widow from Manchester," and Lady Dorothy Howard, the daughter of the Countess of Carlisle, addressed meetings for Snowden. Socialists with slouch hats and red ties, and a lady from Halifax dressed completely in scarlet, gave colour to his meetings.

And there was "Tommy," a ragged urchin who

attached himself to Snowden, rode beside the driver of his motor-car, kept order in remarkable fashion at meetings, and by some mysterious means managed to overcome the obstinacy of the post office in a matter concerning his election literature. The candidate paid Tommy a special tribute after the contest.

But neither Tommy, nor the red-clad lady, nor the motor-car, nor posters describing Snowden as "A Yorkshire lad fur Yorkshire foak," nor Dr. Macnamara's letter, nor Mrs. Pankhurst's winsomeness, carried the day. When the polling was over on March 25th, Alderman Brotherton, with 2,960 votes, held a majority of 891 over Snowden's 1,979—the largest majority ever obtained by a Conservative candidate in the constituency. Most of the local Liberals had abstained from voting.

Snowden's high repute with the Independent Labour Party was, if anything, increased by his luckless adventure at Wakefield. During his campaign a circular was sent round by the Farsley group to other branches, appealing to them to support the nomination of Snowden as chairman of the Party. The writers insisted that his "popularity and public influence eminently fit him for the position of chairman"; and that his election "would be a guarantee for the stability and political

rectitude of our Party." As soon as his attention was drawn to this manifesto, Snowden repudiated it and refused to allow his name to go forward.

He also rebuked a group of hotheads who wished the Independent Labour Party to denounce high municipal salaries. It was all very well, he argued, to say that no man in the world was worth £500 a year ; but, living under existing conditions, it was surely consistent with Socialist ideas to endeavour to make municipal employment more attractive than private employment.

Although at Westminster Austen Chamberlain had just stated (much to the annoyance of Keir Hardie's worshippers) that " I do not recognize such a title as that of ' Labour Member,' " recognition was further forced on him in the autumn of 1902 by the unopposed return of D. J. Shackleton, at a bye-election in Clitheroe, as a nominee of the Labour Representation Committee. Snowden had at first been mentioned for the seat, but Shackleton's reputation among the Clitheroe cotton-operatives made him a better choice. Socialist candidates did well also at the municipal elections in November. They gained thirty-two seats ; twenty-four out of eighty Independent Labour Party candidates were successful.

Enormous impetus was given to political Labour by the Taff Vale judgment, which established the

legal responsibility of a Trades Union for damages caused by the actions, authorized or unauthorized, of its officials and members. This blow led many Trades Unions to start political funds, for the express purpose of returning men to Parliament who would compel a change in the law. As a result, the Labour Representation Committee quickly reversed its previous decision, and, no longer thinking the proposal premature, decided to prepare a scheme for a general political levy on the Trades Unions. In the following year, 1903, Will Crooks, its candidate at Woolwich, won a Parliamentary bye-election ; and Arthur Henderson was successful at Barnard Castle in a three-cornered fight against Tories and Liberals.

The notable Newcastle conference of the Labour Representation Committee was held in this year, at which it finally decided upon a voluntary levy of its constituent societies, at the rate of a penny a year a member. Out of this a political fund was to be built up, and an annual salary of £200 paid to every Member of Parliament elected under its auspices. At the same time, with a clear determination to get its money's worth, the Committee decided that any successful candidate who failed to abide by the decisions of the Parliamentary group, must resign his seat—and his salary. This last proposal was definitely due to the Independent

Labour Party delegates ; and many Trades Unionists protested against it as a portent of the tyranny which Socialist idealogues sought to exercise over the party. The decision, however, was afterwards rescinded.

The eleventh annual conference of the Independent Labour Party was held in the Co-operative Hall, York, at Easter, 1903. Snowden was unanimously elected Chairman. It is worth noting that the aim of the Society was now, in its latest form, stated to be, " An Industrial Commonwealth founded upon the socialization of land and capital." The methods for attaining this were, first, the education of the country in the principles of Socialism ; secondly, the industrial and political organization of the workers ; thirdly, the independent representation of Socialist principles on all elective bodies.

It was pointed out that Snowden was the first Englishman and the first bachelor to occupy the chair of the Party ; and that its tradition of teetotalism would be upheld by him. Of the last there could be no doubt, for very shortly after his election Snowden, opening a new I.L.P. club at Blackburn, announced with satisfaction that only four per cent. of Labour clubs throughout the country sold drink. Yet in the issue of the *Labour Leader*, Keir Hardie's paper, previous to that which printed Snowden's statement, there appeared

a letter from Miss Ethel Annakin, complaining of excessive drinking and gambling in Labour clubs.

It is remarkable that this clash of views, though not of ideals, should mark what was probably the first appearance in that journal of the lady who was soon to become Mrs. Philip Snowden.

CHAPTER VI

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND THREE is one of the principal landmarks in Snowden's career. Not only had he been elected Chairman of the Independent Labour Party, the tabernacle of Socialist political orthodoxy in England, but, with the illness of Keir Hardie, the founder and chief ornament of the Party, he became its most prominent representative.

At the end of the year the Independent Labour Party bought Keir Hardie's weekly, the *Labour Leader*, greatly enlarged it, and thus provided a wider reading public for Snowden and his principal colleagues. He spoke up and down the country in opposition to Joseph Chamberlain's new project of Tariff Reform, in addition to preaching Socialism and delivering addresses to Wesleyan "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon" gatherings, and "Ethical" and "Labour" churches. (One meeting, by the way, which he addressed at Chapel-en-le-Frith was, by an oversight, reported in the local Conservative paper a week before it took place,

with the discouraging comment, "There was only a moderate attendance.")

The Keighley Socialists were sufficiently proud of their native hero to urge him to be their candidate at the next General Election instead of, or as well as, standing for Blackburn; he declined. He published a pamphlet on Tariff Reform, *The Chamberlain Bubble*, in which he outlined certain fiscal and colonial views from which he has never departed. He had expressed doubts, as far back as his first Blackburn election, three years before, of the economic importance of India to the Empire; he now began an onslaught upon the Colonies, which, he said, enjoyed the blessings of independence, shared the glory of the Empire, were protected by the navy, and, "though young, strong and prosperous, leave the old mother to pay for their independence, glory and protection." He reiterated, as steps towards the creation of the Co-operative Commonwealth, the necessity of nationalizing mines and railways and of taxing landlords and unearned dividends.

He had long since realized that the Labour Movement, though overflowing with sentiments and "ideals," was sadly deficient in practical knowledge of economics. He set himself, therefore, to master this subject, and, though his views may not command universal agreement—though,

in fact, they have aroused bitter opposition—they nevertheless demonstrate considerable erudition. Even in 1903 intelligent observers were prophesying that he would be Chancellor of the Exchequer in the first Labour Cabinet. Their prophecy was fulfilled twenty years after.

Before any Labour Cabinet, or even a vigorous Labour Party, could exist, it was necessary to win a final victory over those who still thought that political Labour could be retained as an annex to the Liberal Party. Snowden entered into a controversy with a leading Liberal journalist, H. W. Massingham, on this point.

The Liberal-Labour alliance, Snowden pointed out, had given the workers only eight Liberal-Labour Members of Parliament in thirty years ; whereas, within the last eighteen months, out of five contests in which independent Labour candidates had appeared, they had won three seats. Far from political Labour remaining part of the Liberal Party, it proposed to carry the war into its neighbours' territory. It intended to convert not only the Radicals, but the rank and file of the Conservatives too. It was only by independence that a great democratic Party could be created. As to whether this Party would be called Socialist, Snowden said he did not know by what name the "People's Party" would be known ; but if it

were truly a party of reform, it would, by any name, be doing the work of Socialism.

The Liberal *Daily News*, commenting on this and other articles, described Snowden as "the ablest mind which has perhaps ever been associated with the Labour Movement in this country."

One sign of his intellectual maturity was a certain impatience with his more sloppy-minded Socialist colleagues. He complained of their verbose resolutions, "as long and broad as a Scotchman's foot." The difficulties of putting paper schemes into practice, he warned them, had sobered intelligent Labour's optimism, and compelled it to moderate its immediate demands. And he pointed out the inconsistency of the Labour Representation Committee which, at its recent conference in February, 1904, passed a resolution to liberate Labour from the domination of the landlords and capitalists, but rejected a supplementary resolution that its ultimate object was the "Socialist control of the means of production and distribution."*

* Readers who have reached this stage of my book may be puzzled from time to time by the confusing and varying titles of the various Socialist organizations named. Up to the point at which we have arrived—the beginning of 1904—the Labour Movement was a kaleidoscopic medley of tendencies and groupings. It may be well to describe here the three chief organizations with which we have to concern ourselves. They are as follows:

1. *The Independent Labour Party;* founded in 1893 by Keir Hardie. (Snowden joined it in 1894; became a member of its National Administrative Council in 1898, and Chairman in 1903.)

Snowden himself, however, was not wholly weaned from extreme utterances, as was shown when, following the enthusiastic adoption by the annual conference of the Independent Labour Party of a resolution in favour of women's suffrage, moved by Mrs. Pankhurst, he declared that " We believe the capacity of women for administration is equal—I am almost inclined to think superior—to that of men."

The Labour Representation Committee had now made itself independent of its parent, the Trades Union Congress ; its active supporters, like Snowden, felt that they had thus released it from the

A propagandist society, aiming at the establishment of Socialism by political means.

2. *The Trades Union Congress ;* founded in 1864 as a central co-ordinating authority for the individual Trades Unions. It was not intended to be a political body, but, as we have seen, showed an increasing tendency, first, towards encouraging the return of Trades Unionists to Parliament ; and, secondly, towards the acceptance of Socialism. By 1904 it was definitely committed to Socialist representation in Parliament. Without its financial support, no large Labour group could hope for separate existence in Parliament.

3. *The Labour Representation Committee ;* founded in 1900 by the joint efforts of the Independent Labour Party, other minor Socialist societies and the Trades Union Congress. Though originally subordinate to the authority of the Trades Union Congress, the Labour Representation Committee became an independent body in 1904. Its function was to nominate candidates and raise funds —if possible, from the Trades Unions—to maintain a separate Labour party in Parliament, with a Socialist programme. In 1906 the cumbrous title " Labour Representation Committee " was changed to " Labour Party," by which name this organization, which has already formed two Governments, is now known.

paralysing "Lib-Lab" tradition of the Trades Unions. At the Committee's 1905 conference, however, an attempt was made by recalcitrant Trades Unionists to exclude the "intellectuals"—by whom they meant people like Snowden, belonging to the I.L.P. or the Fabian Society—from the Committee. Not only did this attempt fail, but a counter-resolution to make *all* Socialist societies eligible for membership was adopted.

A motion also was introduced to empower the Committee to permit Members of Parliament who had been elected under its auspices to depart in exceptional cases from their strict independence of the other Parties. Snowden took the lead in opposing this. He carried the day, thus forcing the Committee (the forerunner of our present Labour Party) back into a permanent position of isolation in Parliament, wholly separate from Liberals and Conservatives alike. Snowden's action on this occasion must be recognized as one of the most decisive events in the history of British Labour politics.

The Socialist ideal *alone* could inspire political enthusiasm, he argued, though not on the same occasion. Socialism *alone*, with its "sure foundation on economics, history and morality," offered hope to the hungry souls of the people. Socialism *alone* could analyse the causes of poverty and

riches, of " the undeserved misery of the Many and the unmerited luxury of the Few."

Among the delegates from Nelson at the 1905 conference of the Independent Labour Party was Miss Ethel Annakin, who, it may be recalled, had protested two years before against the drink and gambling which, she claimed, were indulged in at Labour clubs. Snowden, of course, was a prominent figure at the conference. On March 13th Philip Snowden and Ethel Annakin were married quietly in a registry-office at Otley-in-Wharfedale, a few miles east of his birthplace. Snowden was then forty years of age.

Ethel Annakin belonged to a Nonconformist family of Harrogate. Dark-eyed, golden-haired, fresh-complexioned, she was esteemed by her friends for her good looks, her musical gifts, and her energy. She went to Liverpool in 1902 to take a training course as a teacher at Edge Hill, and there came under the influence of Dr. Aked, a prominent " pro-Boer " and social reformer. She had been taught from childhood that drink was responsible for most of the poverty in the world ; but this gradually broadened into an acceptance of Socialism, and, when she had completed her course, she divided her time, in Leeds and Nelson, between school-teaching and advocating Temperance and Socialism. There could be no doubt of the

intensity of her Socialist beliefs, and their identity with her husband's. "Socialism is the spirit of the age," she told a caller who congratulated her on her marriage; "it is the very air we breathe. Men and women are conscious of its existence. You propound a Socialist theory, and they tell you that it is exactly what they themselves have been thinking and believing for some time. I have given Socialist lectures to religious bodies—pure Socialism from beginning to end—and have been applauded most vigorously though I haven't mentioned the name of Socialism."

She was attended at the wedding by her sister and a Socialist friend, Isabella Ford; Snowden by John Whittaker, of Bradford, his cousin and boyhood friend—whose intention to decorate the ceremony by wearing a top-hat had been dashed by the bridegroom's written instruction, "For Heaven's sake, John, don't come in a swine-grease hat!"—and by F. W. Jowett, his colleague in the Independent Labour Party. The little party walked from the registry-office in bright sunshine to the White Horse Hotel, where their healths were drunk at the wedding luncheon. The earnest pair enjoyed an unconventional honeymoon: Snowden addressed a meeting the same evening at the Shipley Co-operative Society; another, next evening, at Keighley; and a third, the following evening, at Dewsbury.

His admirers, however, were not prepared to waive all formalities. At the beginning of April five hundred of his constituents assembled at the Exchange Hall, Blackburn, to greet the bride and bridegroom, and present them with the outcome of a hastily opened subscription. The gifts included an onyx clock, a pair of bronze-gilt vases, a porcelain dinner-service, and much silver. Snowden, responding with great emotion, admitted that he had been able to escape in the past from various embarrassments and tight corners, but saw no chance to do so here with any credit to himself. "I can meet the attacks of enemies," he said, "but the kindness of friends unmans me." Mrs. Snowden, called on for a speech, pledged herself to consecrate her energies to the service of the people. How generous everyone was! "I sometimes say to Mr. Snowden, when he exclaims how kind so-and-so is, 'Why, is there *anybody* unkind?'"

And a few weeks later, Keir Hardie, now recovered from his illness, presented them at Ilkley with a table-kettle and spirit lamp on behalf of the executive of the Independent Labour Party. "Philip Snowden's great gifts as a speaker, and the high moral power of his appeal," Hardie insisted, "have exercised a deep and admirable influence on the spirit and work of British Socialism."

Then came the belated fall of the Conservative Government. Snowden, with the rest of the Socialist politicians, was flung into the election contest. The Labour Representation Committee endorsed fifty-two candidates, of whom thirty-two were members of the Independent Labour Party. Twenty-two of these, however, were backed by their Trades Unions, and the Independent Labour Party found itself financially responsible for only ten—Snowden at Blackburn ; Keir Hardie at Merthyr Tydvil ; F. W. Jowett at Bradford ; Ramsay MacDonald at Leicester ; J. R. Clynes at Manchester ; T. Summerbell at Sunderland ; James Parker at Halifax ; Bruce Glasier at Birmingham ; Joseph Burgess at Camlachie ; and Dr. Stanton Coit at Wakefield.* The I.L.P. issued an appeal to all branches and sympathizers for a £4,000 election fund.

Of the two "Blackburn baronets" who had defeated Snowden in 1900, one, Sir W. H. Hornby, was again standing, but the other, Sir William Coddington, retired in favour of Geoffrey Drage, a Conservative authority on industrial and social

* Dr. Stanton Coit, an American by birth, was the head of a body known as the "Ethical Movement," and the butt of one of Mr. Bernard Shaw's pleasantest remarks, which I do not remember to have seen in print. Shaw's attention was drawn at a Socialist soirée to the almost incredible sight of Dr. Coit dancing. After a long and critical inspection Shaw commented, "No, he isn't dancing. That's the Ethical Movement."

problems. Mr. Drage had represented Derby in Parliament from 1895 ; but he was beaten there in 1900 by Richard Bell, the railwayman, and had since been defeated by Will Crooks in the Woolwich bye-election. The Liberals put up one candidate, Edwin Hamer ; and Snowden ran as the only Labour man.

Like all elections in which he took part, there was no absence of excitement, although each Party was convinced that this was wholly due to the personalities introduced by its opponents. Mr. Drage called Snowden a " strutting peacock " and accused him of a " thumping lie." Another Conservative speaker insisted that " this political windbag from Keighley deserves drumming out of the town for the work he has done against Sir Harry Hornby. It is all very well for a man of straw to issue an election address promising to give everything, like the Devil when he took Christ up to the pinnacle, but nothing will come of it."

As usual Snowden issued challenges as well as appeals to his supporters. Referring to the retiring members' charitable gifts to their constituents, he said, " If it isn't a Parliamentary representative you want ; if it's a relieving officer you want ; if you're prepared to sell your votes for charitable doles ; may I say how you can obtain the same result in a different way ? If you really want a relieving

officer, all you have to do is to go to the workhouse."

His meetings were many and well-attended. Keir Hardie came to speak for him. There was much less interruption and heckling than at the previous election. On one occasion the complaint was made that Snowden never referred to the Empire. "Why, friends," he replied, according to the local press, "haven't we had enough of Empire in the last ten years to make us sick of the word? Empire, forsooth! What is Empire to you, who haven't the guarantee of a week's work before you? Empire suits the landed classes and the moneyed classes. Why? The wise man of Israel said, 'The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.'" Then the meeting sang a song which began, "Snowden for Blackburn! Chant it once more!" to the tune of "Eileen Alannah."

The charge of atheism was brought out again, and a scurrilous pamphlet about Snowden circulated. "Only ignore it!" he told his angry friends. "Treat it with the contempt it deserves. It will do *them* more harm than good."

Polling day came on January 16th. Except for a couple of hours' break at noon, Blackburn was drenched with rain, which helped to calm the populace. The Conservatives issued posters: "Vote for Hornby and Drage, the Owd Gam' Cock and

the Young Gam' Cock ! " and imported a jaunting-car to captivate the sentiments of the Irish voters. Snowden's committee published a rival poster, " We want a Gam' Cock that can feight. Snowden con. He's o' reight."

The result was declared in the evening :

Elected	Hornby - - -	10,291
	Snowden - - -	10,282
	Drage - - -	8,932
	Hamer - - -	8,892

Over 95 per cent. of the electorate had polled : 1,504 had plumped for Snowden ; 7,871 shared their two votes between him and Hamer ; 822 voted for him and Hornby ; and only 85 for him and Drage.

He was in ; he had smashed the long tradition of solid Blackburn Toryism ! So shocked was Sir Harry Hornby by this result that he scandalized friend and foe by an angry tirade when he was supposed to be expressing thanks to the Returning Officer. Snowden's speech, a conventional one, was interrupted by cries for " Three cheers for the Revolution ! " which were given. Then the candidates dispersed to their respective head-quarters.

Though Snowden had expressed high hopes of winning, he had not been confident. The realization of his ambition, to be elected to Parliament,

overwhelmed him. His first thought was of his wife, lying ill in Blackburn ; the second of his mother, anxiously awaiting the result in her cottage at Cowling. He showed real and keen emotion ; his habitual reserve dropped from him like a shroud, as he acknowledged the applause and congratulations of his friends.

Yet his first words when he addressed them formally at his head-quarters were a dig at the unfortunate Mr. Drage : " One result of this election, friends, is that poor old Jeff is dead and gone." The gathering promptly sang a ribald quatrain on the subject of Mr. Drage's discomfiture, and amid cries of " Good owd gam' cock," Snowden continued, " If I were to say that Mr. Drage has conducted this election either intellectually or nobly, I should be saying what is not an actual fact." Then, having disposed of his opponent, " I have no personal ambitions. Still, if I had to go to Parliament, I wanted to go to Parliament in the lifetime of my dear old mother. To me one of the sweetest things this victory brings is the knowledge that it will bring joy to her old age."

His arrival at Cowling a few days later was a triumph. His neighbours were determined to frustrate his wish for a quiet return home. The driver of the omnibus which met him at the station,

three miles away, secretly telephoned the news of his presence to Cowling. When he reached the village, its inhabitants were massed to welcome him. With their band playing "See the Conquering Hero Comes," they escorted him to his mother's cottage, and compelled him to address them from her doorstep.

After an hour's respite, during which the band encouraged him with "Auld Lang Syne" and "Home, Sweet Home," they carried him off to the village hall, the scene of his earliest exploits. There he spoke of his victory, and called on them to support the Keighley Labour candidate, who had not yet gone to the poll. At the end of the meeting the vicar expressed the pride and satisfaction of Cowling in his success, and moved a resolution, which was carried with acclamation, that the children at the local school should be given a day's holiday in honour of the unprecedented achievement of one of its old scholars.

A meeting was held at Keighley to celebrate Snowden's election, and that of his old friend, G. J. Wardle, at Stockport. Alderman Horner, to whom they both owed so much in the early days of their activity, made the principal speech and announced that he was certain that these two recruits to Westminster would not be mere glorified windbags, flaunting red ties, but would establish

themselves immediately as among the most practical men in the House.

Snowden remarked, soon afterwards, that, anyhow, he would not emulate so many Members of Parliament in talking for a prodigious time and saying infinitely little to the purpose.

He warned his friends, too, not to gauge the value of a representative solely by the notoriety he attained in the House, illustrating this by the story of a candidate who, boasting to his constituents of the dozens upon dozens of questions he had put to Ministers during the previous session, was disconcerted by a plaintive voice in the crowd : " What an ignorant blockhead you must be ! "

CHAPTER VII

WHEN Snowden was elected to Parliament in 1906 there hung on the wall in his study this text : " But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of.—(2 Timothy iii. 14.)"

That he intended to be consistent at Westminster to his platform as a candidate is clear from some remarks which he made to an interviewer, who came from London to inspect this new Parliamentary phenomenon. There were two sorts of Socialists, Snowden told him. He spoke disdainfully of " those who are Socialists because they do not happen to have been born rich. They are for ever denouncing the capitalists and demanding better times for themselves. But such men are not the real article, and naturally they part from us in time." He referred, as a dreadful example, to John Burns, who had just been appointed President of the Local Government Board in the new Liberal Cabinet, the first working-man to attain such a distinction. " Burns was once a member of the Social Democratic Federation, but, when opportunity

came, he left the Socialist ranks. This class is not of us, although they may be with us." But the true Socialism, the real article, "the new Labour Movement rests its strength on the spirit of self-sacrifice and of mutual help. It re-teaches men that they are not to live for themselves but for the community."

The Labour Party—the Labour Representation Committee had now adopted this less cumbrous title—is "not so much a homogeneous party," he went on, "as a fighting alliance of divergent groups." The new Labour Members, although united on a single political platform, were not, like the Independent Labour Party, "a group united on the great economic issues." But he left no doubt in his interviewer's mind that the I.L.P. intended to press its Socialist programme upon its colleagues in the Labour Party, upon the other Parties at Westminster, and upon the country as a whole.

Twenty-nine men in the new House of Commons had been elected as Labour Party representatives. Of the ten candidates for whose expenses the I.L.P. was responsible, no fewer than six, in addition to Snowden, had been returned :

MERTHYR TYDVIL (2 seats)

Thomas (Lib.) - - -	13,971
Keir Hardie - - - -	10,187
Radcliffe (Lib.) - - -	7,776

SUNDERLAND (2 seats)

Stuart (Lib.)	13,620
Summerbell	13,430
Haggie (Con.)	7,879
Pemberton (Con. Free Trader)	7,244

BRADFORD (1 seat)

Jowett	4,957
Flower (Con.)	4,147
Claridge (Lib.)	3,580

LEICESTER (2 seats)

Broadhurst (Lib.-Lab.)	14,745
J. R. MacDonald	14,685
Rolleston (Con.)	7,504

HALIFAX (2 seats)

Whitley (Lib.)	9,354
Parker	8,937
Crossley (Con.)	5,041

MANCHESTER, N.E. (1 seat)

Clynes	5,386
Ferguson (Con.)	2,954

The Party at once demonstrated its independence

by electing Hardie chairman and appointing its own Whips. In addition, there were fourteen miners' Members, who, however, refused to merge themselves with the Labour Party and sat with the Liberals ; as also did eleven survivors of the old Liberal-Labour group.

The House of Commons and the general public woke to the discovery that a revolutionary change had taken place at Westminster. The prospects of the new Party were eagerly canvassed, and its personalities discussed ; Hardie, Snowden and Ramsay MacDonald attracted most attention. In the nomination of committees at the beginning of the session, Snowden was appointed to the Royal Commission on Inland Waterways.

" The Robespierre of the Labour Movement," as someone nicknamed him, waited only three weeks before making his maiden speech in the debate on Sir John Kitson's resolution that " This House, recognizing that in the recent General Election the people of the United Kingdom have demonstrated their unqualified fidelity to the principles and practice of Free Trade, deems it right to record its determination to resist any proposal . . . to create in this country a system of Protection." The debate was eagerly awaited as the first serious trial of strength between the rival Parties. Unknown to Snowden, another new member,

F. E. Smith of Birkenhead, had also decided to make his maiden speech in it.

Snowden had put down an amendment to the resolution, but, by some twist of procedure, was not allowed to move it. Instead, the Speaker undertook to call on him during the later portion of the debate, if he would agree to speak to the original motion. Snowden, bewildered like every other new Member at the intricacies of Parliamentary practice, readily consented, and set to work to prepare a speech upon which his Parliamentary future must largely depend.

Sir John Kitson opened the debate in the afternoon. Every bench bulged with Members ; the galleries were full. Snowden, as was his habit, climbed to a back bench—it was called " the Mountain " by such of his admirers as were students of the French Revolution. He was extremely restless. More than once he found it impossible to sit still, and walked out of the House, usually returning to a different seat. Or he engaged in nervous conversation with friends. It was observed that his face was even paler and tauter than usual, his deep eyes brighter, and his chin more grimly set. When the House adjourned for dinner, he went to the smoking-room where he wrote his usual daily notes for the *Leeds Mercury*, coming back immediately afterwards. Once more he began

to climb towards the "Mountain"; but his colleagues stopped him, ushering him into Hardie's accustomed seat at the end of the second bench below the gangway. At half-past nine, Mr. Llewelyn Williams sat down amid Welsh Liberal cheers; and the Speaker called upon Snowden.

He rose, resting his weight partly on the back of the bench in front of him. John Morley, the Secretary for India—one of the two "Honest Johns" on the Government Front Bench; the other was John Burns—put aside the letters which he had been reading, and waited with interest to hear one with whose repute on the platform he, as a Blackburn man, was familiar. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Prime Minister, ambled in. Mr. Lloyd George leaned forward to listen.

Snowden began. His nervousness vanished. For nearly twelve years he had been accustomed, week in and week out, to address strange and often unsympathetic audiences all over the country. Neither the size of his audience nor the standard of the previous speeches intimidated him.

He startled the Liberals at the outset by remarking in quick, matter-of-fact sentences, that the premise of the resolution, that the electorate had "demonstrated their unqualified fidelity to the

principles and practice of Free Trade," was a matter of opinion. Different speakers, it seemed to him, had ascribed different reasons for their success at the polls. Some declared the voters' indignation at the importation of Chinese labour into South Africa to be the cause, others the desire of the Irish people for Home Rule ; the Secretary for War had laid great stress on popular hopes for financial retrenchment. No doubt, Snowden pleasantly suggested, his lips twisted in a nervous smile, the Minister for Education would shortly claim that the country had really evidenced an overwhelming demand for the promised Education Bill.

So far as his own constituents at Blackburn were concerned, he might perhaps be allowed to insist that his election had been due less to any specific item in his programme than to " a moral indignation amongst the people at the waste and mismanagement which had marked the previous years." If the electorate of the country had expressed themselves definitely upon any particular point, it was surely, as the vastly increased polls given to Labour candidates showed, that " the energies and activities of Parliament in the future should be directed whole-heartedly, and in no timorous way, to the treatment of great industrial problems."

And now he made the point which he had

incorporated in his stillborn amendment. Might he point out to Free Traders, he inquired, that sixty years of Free Trade had utterly failed to mitigate or palliate these social evils ?

" No, no, no," objected Mr. Lloyd George.

Snowden, never too tolerant of interruption, lifted one arm and extending it with crooked fingers towards the future Prime Minister, rasped out in swift, jerky tones, " We have the admission of the First Lord of the Treasury that one-third of our population—forty per cent. of our working-class people—are on the verge of hunger, perpetually struggling to keep body and soul together ! " The Labour Party, therefore, while standing as firmly as the most ardent member of the Cobden Club for the maintenance of Free Trade, declined to fall down and worship this god. During the last sixty years there had *not* been a continuous improvement in the condition of the people ; " I am prepared to maintain a statement often made, but almost as often disputed, that the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer."

The Labour men round him cheered this familiar sentiment. Mr. Harold Cox enchanged a sardonic whisper with Mr. Chiozza Money. Other Liberals jeered ; Conservatives laughed at what they took to be signs of a split in the ranks politically opposed to them.

Snowden was unmoved by this demonstration. It proved that he held the ear of the House. These six hundred men—notoriously the most difficult audience in the world—were rising to the same baits, applauding the same arguments, dissenting from the same statements, as any other big audience which he was used to addressing. He went on with fresh confidence. "I do not wish it to be understood," he explained, "that I deny that any improvement has taken place in the condition of the people. I am prepared to admit that a considerable improvement has taken place"—("Hear, hear!" from the Liberals)—"but it is not due to Free Trade." Free Traders seemed to have forgotten the Factory Act, the Co-operative Movement, the Municipal Corporations Act, the growth of Trades Unions. The Labour Party wished to extend the principle of Free Trade to liberate industry from the monopolies which now oppressed it—such as the private ownership of coal and mining royalties. He quoted, from memory, but accurately, comparative figures about mining royalties in Cumberland and in Belgium; about the cost of living under a protective tariff in America; about the burden which the British landlords laid upon their country; about the increase of great incomes in England.

The money for the social reforms which the

Labour Party advocated, he declared, could be taken from the landlords and the industrial monopolists. Nor would this injure the country ; on the contrary, it would lighten the load on industry, and enable our commerce to hold its own in the markets of the world for another twenty years. "I hope the Government will turn into Acts of Parliament the beautiful sentiments contained in the perorations to their speeches when in Opposition. We Labour Members have been returned to this House expressly to do something to better the lives of the common people. We want to put some brightness and joy into the lives of those whose days are a bitter and never-ending struggle to keep body and soul together, and who are ever confronted with the terrible nightmare of extreme poverty in their old age."

In conclusion, he implored the Government to realize its responsibilities and to make the most of its opportunities, so that, "When the end of your term of office comes, you will have the joy and satisfaction of knowing that, by your efforts, you have done something to bring nearer to the poor people of this country the day of universal peace, righteousness and joy."

He sat down—physically exhausted, as ever after such intense efforts. The knot of Labour members round him cheered. The rest of the

House, however impressed it might be by his earnestness and the clarity of his arguments, could not be expected to applaud with more than perfunctory warmth, for he had attacked Liberals and Conservatives alike. Yet, as an acute observer remarked in the *British Weekly*, the leading Nonconformist paper, "Although his views pleased neither one side nor the other, the whole House was spellbound by this thin, small man, with great brow overhanging an ascetic face, with a strangely attractive voice, and with the dress of a poor clerk. For an hour Mr. Snowden spoke rapidly and forcibly, replying to arguments used in the debate, with culture in tone and phraseology, and without a single note. Such a man and such a speech presented a significant contrast with the 'pretty lordlings' of the old school, and their shrugs, their hums and ha's."

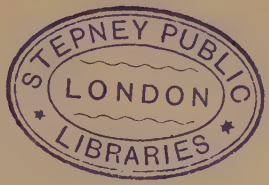
A tall, slender, dark, unknown youth, who rose on the Conservative benches to continue the debate, evoked a chorus of "Hear, Hears" when he began, "Mr. Speaker, Sir,—In whatever section of the House hon. Members may sit, or however profoundly they may differ from the economic views which underlie the remarks of the hon. Member for Blackburn, they will all, at least, desire to join in a tribute to the sincerity and ability displayed in the speech he has just delivered." Then, with

a passing reference to the "bitterness, almost contempt" with which Snowden had referred to the possessors of large incomes, F. E. Smith swung into that torrent of brilliant impudence which founded his Parliamentary reputation.

Snowden returned the compliment next day. Smith's speech, he wrote in his diary, was a piece of comedy more admirably acted than one could often hope to see in a theatre. "Every sentence was like the sting of a scorpion. As an effort of sustained smartness I have never heard it equalled." In this mood of generosity, he said of Winston Churchill that, whatever the "Parliamentary style" might be, this young Liberal possessed it as certainly as any other man in politics. When Churchill spoke, he explained, his voice, his attitude, his manner and his matter all seemed exquisitely suited to their environment. And, writing of his own début as a Parliamentary speaker, Snowden said simply that he had been very fortunate in his opportunity: the House was full, and he had been heard attentively.

He was beginning to like Parliament. It was very different from what he had expected, especially the smoking-room, where he found a spirit of comradeship quite remarkable in an assembly which included men of every walk in life and every opinion. He acclaimed this as a proof of the

genuinely democratic nature of the House of Commons. A poor man and a Socialist, with neither family influence nor any "unearned" reputation, could feel himself the equal there of any millionaire or peer's son.



CHAPTER VIII

AS chairman of the Independent Labour Party, and a member of the executive of the Labour Party, Snowden spoke with authority in his first Parliamentary session. His early retirement from the former post in favour of Ramsay MacDonald afforded the occasion for another proof of his popularity in Socialist circles ; for the result of the first ballot for the new executive at the I.L.P. annual conference placed him second only to Keir Hardie and far above their nearest rivals.

Keir Hardie - - - -	145
Snowden - - - - -	126
Bruce Glasier - - - -	83
Isabella Ford - - - -	60
Mrs. Pankhurst - - -	53
F. W. Jowett - - - -	40

The predominance of Snowden, Hardie and MacDonald—the " Junta," as they were called—in the I.L.P. was immediately reflected in the Labour Party at Westminster, where they stood

out from all their colleagues, Hardie by virtue of his romantic and vehement personality, MacDonald by his skilful absorption of the Parliamentary atmosphere and the suppleness of his intellect, Snowden by his grasp of practical politics, his mordant eloquence and his skill in debate.

Soon after his maiden speech, however, a mysterious rumour of his death circulated in Blackburn. An anxious telegram was dispatched to him at Westminster ; he replied, as is usual in such cases, that the rumour was " very greatly exaggerated," and proved this by addressing a mass-meeting of no fewer than ten thousand people in the market-place of Blackburn on the first Sunday in May, which had been set aside as " Labour Day."

Already in Parliament he was showing the independence of his nature. (I do not speak of the fact that he was the first Member of Parliament to sit there in a straw hat, the sight of which, high up on his favourite back-bench, hastened the decline of the habit of wearing any kind of hat in the House.) While in debate he was usually ready to subordinate himself to Party discipline, he often took an individual line. Thus, he voted with the Liberal Government for the reduction of the Army. The Party had left its members free to vote as they liked : several of them voted, on the old Irish principle, " agin the Government " ;

Snowden, however, not merely approved the measure, but thought the time "too early to put obstacles in the Government's way."

Very soon afterwards the Party found itself divided again in the debate on Lord Milner's actions in South Africa. A sudden division found them unprepared: as the other Parties prepared to file into the voting lobbies, the Socialists gathered in excited discussion on the floor of the House, Snowden violently gesticulating as he sought to persuade his colleagues to oppose the Government. "If a Civil Service clerk," he argued, "puts a stamp the wrong way up, he in all probability gets censured, but a High Commissioner who violates the law escapes free." But only three Socialists followed him; the rest agreed with Hardie to abstain from voting.

He took an individual line also in urging his colleagues and his I.L.P. audiences not to allow themselves to become too much absorbed in the agitation against the House of Lords, which was, he shrewdly insisted, largely a Liberal device to distract popular attention from the failure of the Government to carry out its pledges and promises. In no circumstances would he countenance any weakening of the barrier between the Labour Party and the Liberals: "Mr. Haldane has said that the Liberal Party will have nothing to do with the

nationalization of the land, of capital or of anything. The Labour Party stands for the principle of Nationalization ; the Liberal Party is opposed to it. Therefore, there is an end—let us hope, once for all—to all talk about agreement between the two Parties upon nine-tenths of their programme."

Both his increasing prominence and these gestures of independence exposed him to a bitter attack by Richard Bell, the railwayman Liberal-Labour Member of Parliament, who, at the annual meeting of the railwaymen's Trade Union, made serious allegations against Snowden, charging him with double-dealing in that, while he now opposed the Liberals, he had gladly accepted from Bell "Liberal gold" for his campaign funds at Wakefield four years before ; and with taking advantage of his position as a Socialist Member of Parliament to make £2,000 a year out of journalism, by writing for two daily and thirty weekly papers and trimming his views to suit their various policies.

As soon as Snowden became aware of these charges, he vigorously rebutted them. He was used to personal attacks, he began ; had he not been accused of every conceivable crime, from being a large landowner to being the possessor of a wife and children who were in the workhouse through his neglect ? He explained that, as the reader already knows, the "Liberal gold" which

he had received at Wakefield was only a couple of sovereigns, neither solicited by himself nor accompanied by conditions ; while, in regard to his journalism, his earnings in this year would fall short of Bell's estimate by £1,750 at least. He was still carrying out a contract for one article every week, which was being syndicated among a group of weekly papers : before his election, this had been his income ; now it went to pay a part of his expenses in Parliament.

The Trades Unionist M.P.'s, he went on, received from their Unions anything up to £400 a year and travelling expenses ; the other Labour Members had no such source of income. True, the Labour Party paid each of its Members in the House an annual salary of £200 ; but this did not balance their budgets. How was the deficit to be made up ? The Members who belonged to the I.L.P. had met to discuss this question at the beginning of the session, he explained, and he, with their approval, had undertaken not to draw on its funds, so long as he could pay his way by journalism ; with this purpose he had agreed to write the daily notes on Parliament which were appearing in the *Leeds Mercury*.

He repudiated the suggestion that he had in any way altered his views in order to please editors. " My name has appeared with every word I have

ever published" ; and the articles were open for inspection. Whether he was writing too much, as Bell suggested, he was not prepared to say ; the *Daily Chronicle* had made the same charge, but, on the other hand, another paper had just attacked him for writing too little. The last, however, had previously invited him to contribute articles to it for nothing !

As for neglecting his duty to his constituents, he pointed out that, during the whole of the time he had been a Member, he had been away from the House of Commons only on three days, and had not missed a single important division. There had certainly been several unimportant divisions after midnight in which he took no part ; but he had not the slightest intention of staying in the House so late. If the business of the nation could not be done in Christian hours, he said, then, so far as he was concerned, it need not be done at all.

Snowden's expenses as a Member of Parliament, it may be mentioned, were heavy. At present he still lived in Yorkshire, and went home once or twice a fortnight ; he had also to maintain rooms in London when the House sat. Railway fares and the cost of spending five or six days a week in London took, even with the extremest economy, more than the weekly allowance of £8 which he received from the Labour Party. In addition,

he had to visit his constituency at Blackburn at least once a month, paying his fares and hotel expenses there. His expenses on stamps amounted to nearly a pound a week. When, soon after the controversy with Bell, he moved to London and set up house in the Baron's Court Road, he found that his rent and domestic outlay—not to speak of entertaining constituents either at his home or in the House—were vastly more than they had been in Yorkshire, while he had still to travel regularly to Blackburn. These sums, which he later detailed to an interested House when the subject of the payment of Members of Parliament was under discussion, made it impossible for him to live on his Labour Party salary without either writing paid articles for newspapers or, what he preferred not to do, accepting a supplementary salary from the I.L.P.

He had reason for satisfaction with the work of the Labour Party in its first year in the House. The Liberal Government, basing itself on the recommendations of a committee which had been appointed by the late Conservative administration to suggest means of mitigating the harsh effect of the Taff Vale judgment on the Trades Unions, proposed a Bill which would limit the legal liability of Trades Union funds to only such damage as was done in consequence of actions authorized, or not

repudiated, by the executives of the Trades Unions. But the Labour Party was not at all content with this. It insisted on broadening the provisions of the Bill to rule out any action whatever against Trades Unions "for the recovery of damage sustained by any person or persons by reason of the action of a member or members of such Trades Unions." The Government, finding that many of its own supporters had given election pledges to support such a demand, withdrew its original proposals and brought in the Trades Disputes Act, which gave effect to the Labour Party's demands in respect to civil damage.

Again largely through Labour Party pressure, nearly a quarter of a million pounds were voted to relieve unemployment under the Unemployed Workmen Act which the Conservative Government had passed in its last year of office. These two successes vastly raised the prestige of the Party; its membership in the country rose to over a million.

Snowden's second year in Parliament, 1907, however, was inaugurated by another of the recurrent squabbles inside the "Movement." The executive of the Labour Party consisted of nine Trades Unionists, representing the Trades Union Congress, three representatives of Socialist societies (among them Snowden), and one from the local

Trades Councils. A motion was brought forward at the Labour Party's annual conference in Belfast, to reduce the Socialist representation from three to one ; and Ben Tillett made a red-hot attack—"The sweat of falsehood stood on the man's brow as he spoke," reported an indignant I.L.P. delegate—upon the Independent Labour Party, which, he declared, had joined the Labour Party only for sordid motives. Snowden, just recovered from an illness, took up this challenge. The I.L.P., he said, had never attempted to impose its policy and ideas upon anybody : its purpose had always been, however, to convince Trades Unionists that they must establish their organization as a political force ; the fact that Trades Unionism was now at last a political force at Westminster, was chiefly due to the work of the I.L.P. The motion was defeated, though by only a small majority, and Snowden was re-elected to the Labour Party executive.

This proved, in various ways, a strenuous year for him. He had the ill-luck to be thrown out of a trap at Norwich after a meeting ; but escaped with bruises only. Soon after his recovery, the Labour Party was confronted with the notable Colne Valley bye-election, at which Victor Grayson, a young Manchester man of vivid personality and violent views, stood as an independent Socialist

candidate and defied the Labour Party executive. The bulk of the latter, jealous of their authority, were in two minds whether to support him. Finally, a grudging assent was given to his candidature, but, with one exception, the chief men of the Party gave him no support in his campaign.

The exception was Snowden, who, though he had little faith in Grayson, and though his strict nature was offended by the latter's unconcealed Epicureanism, went to the Colne Valley to address two meetings on his behalf, and, when Grayson was sensationally victorious, came forward as one of his introducers at Westminster.

It remains to be said that Grayson soon fulfilled the forebodings of the Party executive. Disregarding their wishes, he made a spectacular but quite ineffective attempt to hold up Parliament until the unemployed problem was settled ; then, as a protest against their inaction, he tried to split the Party.

Cleverer men than he considered that it was becoming too moderate ; too intent on alliance with the Trades Unions ; too keen on Parliamentary proprieties ; too careless of the vital principles of Socialism. They wished to turn it from its ideal of a "united Labour Movement" to that of a "united Socialist Movement." Grayson gave them their opportunity. With reckless

contempt for discipline, he opposed the "Junta" on all possible occasions, and talked of founding a new Socialist Party. Other malcontents rallied to him. The climax came in November, 1908, when he refused to appear at a *Clarion* Socialist meeting at the Holborn Town Hall if Keir Hardie also spoke. Hardie was asked by the organizers not to attend ; as a protest against this, the executive of the Independent Labour Party removed Grayson's name from its list of speakers.

The kettle boiled over at the annual conference of the I.L.P. at Edinburgh in April, 1909, when the delegates, after a vigorous speech by Grayson, refused to approve this action by the Executive. In consequence, the four members of the Executive —Hardie, Snowden, MacDonald and Glasier— although re-elected, refused to serve in the coming year.

The I.L.P. had never before passed through such a crisis : the "Junta" and its supporters claimed that the resignations were the only way to teach the insurgents a lesson ; while the latter retorted that the leaders were chiefly actuated by wounded pride. One delegate declared that Snowden and his colleagues had "split the Party to establish unity." Snowden replied that they were "not abandoning the Party, but going back to the rank and file."

For a few weeks the I.L.P. were without an executive. The "Junta" refused to re-consider its decision, and eventually a temporary council was formed from W. C. Anderson, Mary MacArthur, J. R. Clynes, M.P., and George Lansbury. Grayson, defeated in the Colne Valley at the next General Election, faded out of the Labour Movement as swiftly as he had reached prominence in it. He went to America, and then to the Colonies; the "Junta" returned to power.

The only tangible result of Grayson's campaign was that a "British Socialist Party" was formed, incorporating the old Social Democratic Federation and various small sections of other Socialist societies, with the declared aim of political action in complete independence from the existing Labour Party in Parliament. In point of fact, the British Socialist Party differed so little from the old Social Democratic Federation that its formation was futile.

But Snowden's intervention in the Colne Valley bye-election bore unexpected fruit; fifteen years later, in 1922, when Blackburn had rejected him, he found a new political home there, and he still sits for this division at Westminster.

To return to 1907, the advocates of Women's Suffrage were beginning to make political life unbearable. Snowden, though presumably disapproving the more violent exploits of his old

I.L.P. colleague, Mrs. Pankhurst, and her associates—by whose interruptions his own meetings were afterwards interrupted—was one of the chief advocates of their cause in the House of Commons. He made an important speech on their behalf on March 8th, on the Second Reading of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill.

He began by saying that "There are no arguments against the enfranchisement of women, though there are plenty of excuses, many masculine prejudices, and some feminine ignorance." He objected strongly to the statement, made both by some supporters and by some opponents of the Bill, that its effects would be limited to a small minority of presumably wealthy women, and disclosed that, when he had been Chairman of the Independent Labour Party, he had supervised a census taken over a typical section of the country to determine what proportion of women of the working-class would be enfranchised by such a measure as that under debate. "It is impossible to lay down a strict definition of the term 'Women of the working-class,' but for this purpose the definition acted on was those who worked for wages, those domestically employed, and those who were supported by the earnings of wage-earning children." The census had established that 82·4 of the women involved would belong to this class.

Snowden next addressed himself to the objection that women did not want to vote. "To lay down the principle that no legislation shall be enacted, unless the majority of the people whom it is to benefit have expressed their opinion in favour of it, would be a negation of all social legislation. Did the people who were benefited by the Education Act of 1870 declare that they wanted it? Did the people who were benefited by the various sanitary measures which have been passed, say that they wanted them? Has there been an express mandate from the people in regard to any one of the items of legislation mentioned in the King's Speech of the present session? No; progress has been made, and will continue to be made, but not in obedience to the demand of the majority of the people. Progress has been made, and will continue to be made, by the efforts and determination of an intelligent minority."

There were cries of protest at this statement. "I said 'An *intelligent* minority,'" Snowden repeated dryly. Therefore, he went on, "even if it is proved that a majority of women do not want the vote, this is a reason why they should be given it."

He knew that a petition had been received by the House, signed by 21,000 women, against enfranchisement; but he denied that this represented

the true views of British women. In any case, "A petition from those who do not want the vote is no answer to the demand of those who do. There is no reason why women who do wish to have the vote should be deprived of it because others don't want it. There were slaves in America who fought against their own independence ; and there are cases of moral serfdom where, if you want to save the immortal soul of the individual, it is your duty to strike by force the shackles off his wrists and compel him to be free in spite of himself. Every women's organization of a political character, with one exception, is behind this Bill, and that exception ought to recommend the Bill to the Liberal Party, for it is the Primrose League."

He closed on a note of exaltation. "This is the greatest of all measures with which we are called upon to deal. I support it from a profound conviction of the true justice and wisdom of the proposal. It is not a mere franchise which we are considering ; it is a great moral question which will affect the whole moral, economic and social conditions of women and the relationship between the sexes. I believe that the passing of this measure will be more fruitful of good for the future of the human race than any other single act of legislation to which this House can direct its

attention." But the Government and the House chose to disagree with him.

He did no harm to his Parliamentary reputation six weeks later by an attack on Mr. Asquith's Budget. "From the point of view of those with whom I am associated," he complained in what has become almost a formula on such occasions, "no Chancellor of the Exchequer has ever more dismally disappointed expectations." Mr. Asquith had talked a great deal about the necessity of instituting social reform, but "Our idea of social reform is a more equitable distribution of the national wealth. If we take the question of housing the poor, the condition of Labour, the want of educational opportunities, indeed everything which we understand by the social problem, we must recognize that the root-fault is in the unequal and unjust distribution of wealth."

There were two million families in the Kingdom whose income was below a pound a week, whereas, even in a workhouse, where food was bought wholesale, a family of five cost fifteen shillings a week to feed. "Working-class families are living below the standards of workhouse subsistence, and that is why we are hearing so much about the physical deterioration of the people." What was more, the working-classes were being enormously taxed by indirect means. He quoted figures of the

wealth of the country ; in the last ten years, it had increased seven times as fast as in the previous ten years. "Now, here is a vast field for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to exploit by means of a super-tax."

The next speaker, Mr. Evans, who afterwards, as Sir Samuel Evans, became President of the Admiralty and Divorce Court, suggested that he had given the House what was more a lecture, somewhat "venomous" and "exaggerated," on social reform than a criticism of the Budget.

When the House rose for the summer recess, Snowden went on the stump. The list of the places where he travelled will give some idea of his energy. He spoke and debated at Keighley, Worcester, Birmingham, Smethwick, Walsall, Bradford, Derby, Sunderland, Holmfirth, New Mill, Manchester, Stockport, Middleton, Rosendale, Leicester, Portsmouth, Huddersfield, Heywood, Plymouth, Cardiff, Swansea, Dundee, Bury, Sheffield, Ardsley, Stroud, Enfield, Maidstone, Wakefield, Morley, Croydon, Rochdale, Burnley, Newcastle, Desborough, Lancaster, Edinburgh, Govan, Paisley, and South Shields.

South Shields was the constituency of Sir William Robson, the Solicitor-General. Snowden had challenged him to debate publicly on Socialism, which Sir William had attacked ; the invitation not

being accepted, Snowden proceeded to ridicule his opponent in his own fastness. "I must confess that I am at a disadvantage in attempting to reply to the arguments in Sir William's speech," he said, "because he says he has read every book there is on Socialism. I confess I haven't; for there are five thousand of them. But Sir William might have saved himself the trouble of reading 4,999 of the books on the subject, because it appears that his speech was taken entirely from a twopenny pamphlet issued by an Australian stage-manager" and published by a notoriously anti-Socialist society.

Certain opponents had hit upon the ingenious notion of sending round gramophones to broadcast anti-Socialist discourses. "I have a great admiration for gramophones as a method of anti-Socialist propaganda," remarked Snowden. "Indeed, I know of nothing more suitable. Why? Because a gramophone is quite incapable of repeating anything except what somebody has told it, and quite incapable of holding any opinion of its own."

What was more, he said neatly, the anti-Socialist gramophones presented at last a perfect answer to the old poser: "Who will do the dirty work under Socialism?"

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CHAPTER IX

THE most ardent Socialist, even Victor Grayson, could not complain that, in his platform utterances, Snowden's old enthusiasm had been tempered by his sojourn in Parliament. "It is the riches of the rich," he told a meeting at Burton, "which are the cause of the poverty of the poor. There is no other way of making the poor richer than by making the rich poorer." And at Edinburgh, first stating that the incomes of the income-tax-paying section of the population had risen by £240 millions in the last ten years, as against £43 millions in the previous decade, he said that, when the rich called the Socialist programme "Confiscation," one could reply that it was not Confiscation, but Restitution. A fragment of a speech at Newton Abbot may serve as a third example: "Sometimes you get patriotic and talk about your native land. But, as a matter of fact, you have not got any. More than half the land is possessed by fewer than eight hundred persons; ten thousand own more than two-thirds of it." By comparison with these, Mrs.

Snowden's lecture on "The Religion of Woman Suffrage" must have seemed almost bathos.

The Independent Labour Party, the mother-church of political Socialism, was doing well. By the end of 1907 it claimed to have no fewer than 845 of its members on elective bodies in Great Britain, principally upon town councils, urban councils, and boards of guardians. It cast a wide net; Snowden was already preaching that political Socialism meant more than mere working-class representation. Long before the Labour Party enlarged its constitution to claim the allegiance of all "workers by hand or brain," Snowden was saying that he held this broad conception of the meaning and purpose of Labour representation.

He considered that the Labour Movement should be wide enough to admit every man and woman, to whatever social class they belonged, who "work *by hand or brain*" to contribute to the useful wealth of the country, and who shared the Labour Party's desire for an equitable distribution of wealth, the securing of a fuller opportunity for the individual, and the "establishment of right relations" between all citizens. He appealed for support to members of every class, poor and rich alike, who wished these ideals to be enforced by legislation. Nor were the purposes of Socialism any longer to be subordinated to narrow dogmas.

The Labour Party was Socialist because it was dissatisfied with the present structure of society, because it claimed to understand what was wrong, and how the wrong could be righted. In short, he claimed that Socialism was less a programme than a principle : it sought the re-organization of industry and society ; it indicated the ideal and the path, leaving the details to the common sense of the British people.

If the Labour Party could not be held by earnest Socialists to have greatly advanced their cause in 1907, they had much reason for satisfaction—so far as they accepted Snowden's outlook—in the following two years, when Old Age Pensions, an eight hours' working day for miners, the Housing and Town-Planning Act, the Minimum Wage Bill, and the Labour Exchanges Act were passed. Snowden contributed useful proposals to the Government in the preliminary debates on Old Age Pensions, and, after Mr. Asquith had carried through his 1908 Budget, Mr. Lloyd George who, on the death of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. Asquith's promotion to the premiership, became Chancellor, was able to say, amid Liberal applause, that " Mr. Snowden has made many suggestions which will no doubt be valuable to future Chancellors of the Exchequer."

Snowden promptly wrote a pamphlet, pleasantly

entitled "A Few Hints to Lloyd George," in which he outlined four new sources of revenue particularly agreeable to his Party : first, a super-tax on large incomes—a proposal which had been recommended by the Dilke commission on the income-tax in 1906 ; secondly, the taxation of industrial monopolies ; thirdly, increased death-duties ; and, fourthly, the taxation of land values. He expressed hope that, although there was no mention in the King's Speech of a Land Valuation Bill, Mr. Lloyd George would remedy this deficiency in his forthcoming Budget.

The new Chancellor, glad to ensure the whole-hearted support of the Labour Party for the Budget with which he and Mr. Churchill proposed to beard the Lords, did include land valuation in it. Thus Snowden could claim a very real share in the preliminaries of the struggle of "the People against the Lords," which convulsed English politics for the next two years.

Battle was joined in the constituencies in January, 1910. The Labour Party went to the polls with a special grievance of its own—the Osborne judgment. A month before the election, the House of Lords had finally given its decision in the long-contested action of W. V. Osborne, a foreman-porter at Clapham Junction Station, a branch secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and a

Conservative, against his Trade Union, which, he complained, was imposing a compulsory levy on its members for the support of the Labour Party. The Lords found, as Osborne pleaded, that the Trade Union had no business to engage in political action ; he secured an injunction against the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and his example was quickly followed by anti-Socialist Trades Unionists in other Unions.

The judgment seemed likely to cripple the finances of the Labour Party. What use was it that the Miners' Federation and the majority of the miner Members of Parliament had now, at long last, officially joined the Labour Party, if neither they nor the other Trades Unionist candidates could be supported by their Unions' Funds ? And who would bring legislation to change this, if the Liberals were beaten ? In nearly every constituency, consequently, Labour and Liberalism formed a temporary compact of alliance.

In Blackburn, for example, Snowden, although preserving his accustomed freedom of speech, no longer advised his supporters, as at previous elections, to plump for him and abstain from using their second vote ; but urged them instead to vote jointly for him and for Sir Thomas Barclay, the Liberal candidate, who was an international lawyer and the author of the articles on this subject in the

" Encyclopædia Britannica." Against them, on the Conservative ticket, stood Lord Robert Cecil, the third son of the late Lord Salisbury, and Mr. George Stewart Bowles, the son of Mr. " Tommy " Gibson Bowles. Like Sir Thomas Barclay, both Conservative candidates were strangers to the division ; Snowden, the " carpet-bagger " of 1900, was now the only candidate of the four to whom this charge could not be applied.

His supporters, presuming on his success at the 1906 election, reminded voters that " Wey sed eawr gam' cock cud feight. Hesn'd he done ? Well, vooate o' reight ! "

He displayed his accustomed vigour on the platform. " I say deliberately," he declared, " that Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Bowles are, politically speaking, the two most dishonest Conservative candidates at the present election." And to a heckler, who doubted one of his arguments, he explained that " I stated at the beginning of my speech, my dear friend, that I wanted to appeal only to people of some intelligence." When the man persisted, Snowden warned him that there is an Act of Parliament by which over-troublesome interrupters at public meetings can be punished.

He had some grounds for irritation, for the slanders were being spread in the constituency that he favoured free love ; that he received £5 a week

for his work on the Royal Commission on Canals and Waterways ; that, if he should be elected, Blackburn working-men would be compelled to contribute heavily towards his maintenance ; and, finally, that when, during the last year, he gave advice to old people concerning their pension claims under the new Act, he had charged them threepence a head. Snowden disdained to answer the first charge. To the second, he explained that his work on the Royal Commission was onerous but unpaid ; and he dismissed the third and fourth as lying scandal.

An old man rose in the audience at one of his meetings and asked to be allowed to go on the platform. There he said that it was false that Snowden had taken money from him and others like him who had sought advice about the new pensions. "Not only were we old people not charged anything by him, but there was a good cup of tea and something to eat for every one of us ; and I was grateful for it."

Blackburn polled on January 17th. In those days different constituencies voted on different days ; the first results showed considerable Conservative victories, but Snowden was unperturbed. Predicting that the Conservatives would not poll more than 9,200 votes, he toured the division confidently in an open carriage with his wife, his

father-in-law, and his mother, who, at the age of seventy-eight, had come to see him elected. When the result was announced in the evening, his forecast was found to be extraordinarily accurate. The figures were :

Elected	Barclay (Lib.) - -	12,065
	Snowden - - -	11,896
	Cecil (Con.) - -	9,307
	Bowles (Con.) - -	9,111

The coalition was effective ; 11,239 voters had shared their votes between Snowden and his Liberal colleague.

Politics in 1910 was overwhelmingly concerned with the Budget fight. The death of King Edward VII in May entailed only a short cessation of hostilities. The Labour Party, which had lost five seats at the election but, thanks to the accession of the miners, was forty strong, worked hand in glove with the Liberals ; its own programme went temporarily by the board. This was unfortunate from the point of view of the advocates of Parliamentary Socialism ; for a wave of dissatisfaction was springing up with the methods and results of the Labour Party. It was the old Grayson trouble in a new form.

Tom Mann had returned from Australia and

South Africa to urge theories of "direct action," which approximated to Syndicalism. A group of men in the Welsh mining districts, among them Noah Ablett and A. J. Cook (who collaborated in a notable pamphlet, "The Miners' Next Step"), devised a plan of making the pits progressively more unprofitable for their owners and thus securing them for the miners themselves. A more intelligent, but, as was afterwards proved, a not very much more practicable, theory of industrial development, National Guilds, was evolved by the combined enthusiasm of A. J. Penty, an architect; S. G. Hobson, one of the original members of the Independent Labour Party and the Fabian Society; and A. R. Orage, the editor of a London Socialist weekly paper, the *New Age*.

Orage was a Yorkshire schoolmaster who, from dabbling in theosophy, developed remarkable gifts of brilliant exposition both on the platform and on paper; he gathered round him a group of young writers who—whether or not they were Socialists, or accepted all their editor's political, literary and theosophical doctrines, and the intense personal feuds which accompanied these—were delighted to associate with him in what was, in his régime, the most interesting and vivid English periodical of the present century. (Orage continued to edit it until, after the War, he went to

America.) The *New Age* waged fierce war upon the Socialist supporters of Parliamentary action, which it declared to be both an almost entire waste of energy, and a red herring to draw Labour from its true goal, namely, its release from the wage system. Whereas, it said, the Labour Party was concerned, in practice and ideals, with the inequitable *distribution* of wealth under Capitalism, the Guilds theorists attacked the "wage-slave" basis of Capitalist (and Collectivist) *production*, and proposed the creation of guilds, embracing every rank of worker—from the lowest to the highest—in every main industry, which would conduct that industry on democratic lines for the service of the community. The basis of each guild was necessarily an amalgamation of the Trades Unions and the salaried officials' associations in each main industry. The creation of guilds, the argument continued, could come only from direct pressure by these groups upon the present Capitalist owners; it was impossible that Labour would ever obtain a sufficient Parliamentary majority to be able, even if this were its programme, to transform the wage-system into a guild system.

I have mentioned this theory in some detail because it created a current of unrest inside the Labour Movement quite disproportionate to the numbers of its advocates. There was hardly an

important Trades Union executive whose younger and more intelligent members were not " infected " by the idea of National Guilds. They were thorns in the flesh of the older men, both in the Trades Unions and the Labour Party, who clung to the belief that in Parliament and in Collectivism alone lay the chief hope of materializing the mirage of the " Co-operative Commonwealth." All the eloquence and enthusiasm of Snowden and his colleagues were required to maintain the Party's strength in the constituencies, the more so when another General Election, in December, 1910, followed that of January and further depleted funds already seriously imperilled by the Osborne judgment.

The December election brought Snowden home from the United States, whither he had journeyed in October for a three months' stay to study American social, political and industrial conditions. Leaving Mrs. Snowden behind, he reached Blackburn a few days before the poll. As at the previous election, he found three new candidates in the field. Sir Henry Norman, secretary of the Budget League and Assistant Postmaster-General, was the new Liberal nominee ; Mr. W. B. Boyd Carpenter, a son of the Bishop of Ripon, and Mr. Lindon Riley, a Liverpool barrister, were the Conservatives.

Snowden's campaign was much quieter than

previously ; once again his supporters shelved their quarrels with the Liberals, and joined forces with them against the common enemy. More interesting to us to-day, if not perhaps to the electors of Blackburn then, were Snowden's views on American politics, which, he said, seemed to him practically devoid of real, vital interest. Only in the West had he observed a remarkable political awakening ; life there was far more healthy and vigorous than in the East.

When the nominations were handed in, Snowden, meeting the Lord Mayor of Blackburn, who, in a five years' term, was now presiding over his third General Election, greeted him genially : " What ! You *still* here ? You're like the House of Lords." Turning to his three political rivals, he added, " Candidates come and candidates go, but *he* stays on for ever."

The result of the poll was :

Elected	Snowden - - -	10,762
	Norman (Lib.) - -	10,754
	Boyd Carpenter (Con.)	9,814
	Riley (Con.) - -	9,500

Snowden's mother again drove round the constituency with him during the voting, but his own health did not permit him to attend the count and

to move the customary vote of thanks to the Returning Officer.

The Parliament Act, which destroyed many of the powers of the House of Lords, left the Parliamentary field open once more for the introduction of measures more closely concerning the Labour Party, which, though it had been able to afford contests in only fifty-eight seats, had added two to its Parliamentary strength. Chief among the new Bills of 1911 were the Insurance Act and the Payment of Members Bill.

On the Insurance Act Snowden took a line directly opposed to the majority of his colleagues, led by Ramsay MacDonald. The Labour Party had put down amendments to the Bill ; MacDonald came to an arrangement with the Government not to embarrass it by moving them. Snowden thereupon stood down from the executive of the Labour Party, and threatened to leave it altogether if these tactics were continued. What was the I.L.P. doing, he demanded, to permit such backsliding among its nominees in the House of Commons ? Really, the I.L.P. might just as well dissolve, and consider merging itself in the National Liberal Federation ; there was simply no difference any longer between the Labour Party and the Liberal Party. And, for his part, he wasn't going to acquiesce in this sacrifice of principles to prudence.

Followed by George Lansbury, F. W. Jowett and Will Thorne, he refused to obey the Labour Whip ; they voted against their colleagues. In articles and speeches Snowden derided the motives which dictated the tactics of MacDonald and the others. Every one knew, he said, that four-fifths of the Labour Party's members held their seats through arrangements in their constituencies with the local Liberals ; was it not ridiculous, therefore, to expect that they would dare to quarrel with the Party to whose good-will they owed their election ?

A striking argument in support of this charge was provided by MacDonald's own constituency in Leicester. The second seat there fell vacant, and the local Socialists wished to fight it ; but it was discovered that MacDonald's closest supporters had vetoed this, by arrangement with the local Liberals, on condition that his seat was not contested in future by a Liberal candidate. As Snowden stated, the dominant section of the Labour Party did not believe in a policy which would interfere with the friendly relations between themselves and the Liberals in their constituencies.

MacDonald's following, however, had a plausible case for what was described as their " dependent independence." They were endeavouring to persuade the Liberal Government to introduce legislation to reverse the Osborne judgment ; it seemed

to them the worst possible policy to offend the Liberals at such a moment. The Government, however, was unwilling to go as far as the Labour Party wished. Not until 1913 was the Trades Union Act passed, which legalized the use of Trades Union funds for political purposes ; and then only on condition that unwilling members were given the dubious privilege of " contracting out " from such levies.

Meanwhile, a Payment of Members Bill was introduced, as a sop to advanced opinion in all Parties, including F. E. Smith among the Conservatives.

A speech by Snowden was the outstanding feature of this debate. The House, he began, would understand that it was no agreeable task for him, a Labour Member paid by his Party, to support a motion for the State payment of Members, and to oppose an amendment, which a previous speaker had moved, to reduce the annual salary of £400 proposed by the Government to a lower figure. Yet he thought he was in a particularly favourable position to discuss the subject, for, as a poor man and one of a group of poor men, he had the best reasons for knowing how much expense was imposed on a Member of Parliament by the exigencies of his position.

Ever since he had first been returned to the

House, he said, he had kept an exact account. If he might judge by this, and by the statements of some of his friends, he was bound to say that, "It is the experience of every one of my colleagues that, as Trades Unionists, they would be better off with a wage of £2 a week than they would be with £300 or £350 a year, having to meet all the incidental expenditure connected with a seat in this House."

He presented details of the living and travelling expenses of a Labour Member, contrasting these parenthetically with the fact that an ex-Speaker of the House of Commons had drawn £50,000 from the public funds while he occupied the Chair and £64,000 as a pension in the sixteen years afterwards; while between 1850 and 1883, twenty-four relatives of the Earl of Selborne had drawn no less than £316,750 in salaries and pensions. Repeating that the whole subject was a difficult one for him to discuss, he insisted that the payment of Members would be greatly to the public advantage; would add to the dignity of the House of Commons; was in the interests of representative government; and would "give immeasurable benefit to every cause which means the welfare and progress of the people of this country."

Sir Rufus Isaacs (now Lord Reading), the Attorney-General, followed Snowden, prefacing his

speech with a tribute to him : " He gave us the case from a practical point of view, and I think that is exactly what the House desires to hear." The Bill was passed ; every Member of Parliament received an official salary ; and the Labour Party was thus in part consoled for their outstanding grievance over the Osborne judgment.

The Parliaments of the last two and a half years before the War were chiefly occupied with the Home Rule controversy. The majority of the Labour Party, as in previous sessions, supported the Government through thick and thin, until Snowden, ever concerned at the danger that its ideals were being subordinated to, and enfeebled by, Lobby strategy, began once more to press for a greater measure of independent action.

A similar demand came from a very different quarter. By this time two Labour daily papers had come into existence. The first, the *Daily Herald*, founded as a strike-sheet by the printers' Unions in 1911, became a " Left Wing " platform, and vigorously opposed Labour's Parliamentary dependence on the Liberals. The other Labour daily newspaper, the *Daily Citizen*, was begun in 1912 as the official organ of the Party, and lasted for only a couple of years.

Snowden, by the way, had joined the new National Union of Journalists at the outset of its

career, thus removing all grounds for the complaint sometimes levelled against him at Socialist conferences that he was not a Trades Unionist. His courtesy towards fellow-journalists was notably exhibited on the occasion of a new Budget. A reporter was sent to the House to produce a quick précis of the Chancellor's speech. Bewildered by the complexity of this task, the youth (as he afterwards confessed to a friend) approached Snowden in the Lobby and asked his assistance. Snowden at once led him to a desk and outlined the desired points. This outline was printed word for word in the next issue of the newspaper, and the reporter received a letter of praise from his editor for its clarity and conciseness.

CHAPTER X

SNOWDEN was not in England when the Great War broke out; he had left for America in the beginning of July, 1914. The news of the catastrophe reached him at Vancouver, in British Columbia, where, after a visit to the Rockies, he was boarding a steamer for New Zealand.

During this passage of the Pacific, his vessel was in imminent danger of attack by German cruisers, and had constantly to change course to avoid them. Snowden abandoned his intention of making a tour in Australia, and, after visiting Sydney, returned home through the United States.

His first taste of the misrepresentation and abuse to which he was likely to be exposed, as a pacifist, came from a disgraceful slander in an American newspaper. A young and sensational reporter interviewed him in Portland, Oregon, on his views about the War. Snowden was indignant to find his statements grotesquely misrepresented under the heading: "Briton M.P. Advises British Soldiers to Shoot their Officers." He immediately

confronted the reporter and his editor and, extracting with difficulty their admission that the "interview" was a complete distortion of his remarks, obtained a promise to withdraw the report from later editions of the paper and to prevent its further dissemination.

So far, so good; but a fortnight later, when Snowden reached New York, the lie followed him in the guise of a communication from a special correspondent in Portland. At great personal inconvenience he returned to the West; bearding the journalists in their office, he at last induced the reporter to accompany him to the British Consulate and sign a declaration on oath that his account of Snowden's remarks was untrue. The Consul remarked, with reasonable astonishment, that this was the first time he had ever known anyone obtain satisfaction from a sensational American newspaper.

Arriving in England in the middle of February, 1915, Snowden found the Labour Movement hopelessly split over the attitude which it should adopt. There were many Socialists who, forgetting or repenting their peace-time denunciations of war, either joined the army or, if incapacitated or too old, devoted all their energy to War work and propaganda. Others, consistent in their pre-War pacifism, bitterly opposed British intervention in

the Continental struggle, joining forces with the group of Radicals who shared their views. Others again wavered illogically between the two platforms, endeavouring to escape the prejudice which attached to pacifists but at the same time seizing every opportunity to condemn the aims and actions of the Government.

Snowden did not waver. He immediately proclaimed his detestation of the War. In a speech at Blackburn he said that its outbreak might be due to many immediate causes but, whatever these were, the primary responsibility rested on the working-classes of the belligerent countries, who, by their neglect to take an interest in international affairs, had left these in the hands of Kaisers and Tsars, militarists and diplomats, all out of sympathy with democratic ideals.

As for appearing on a recruiting platform, as so many other prominent Labour men were doing, Snowden said that he would certainly not ask any man to do for him what he was not able to do for himself.

A word is necessary here to explain his attitude during the War. To suggest that he was "anti-British" or "pro-German" is merest folly. He hated the militarist rulers of Germany with all the intensity of his nature; but he was not convinced that their kind was unknown in England.

Throughout the War he took the line that the peoples of the two countries, and of the other nations involved, did not share the sentiments of their bellicose leaders. If only, he argued, genuine representatives of the sentiments of the warring peoples could meet and discuss the situation, the slaughter and destruction could be stopped on honourable terms. I think it very necessary that this should be stated as a preliminary to any account of his activities during the War.

He became the target of anti-pacifist shafts. His opponents recalled a passage in a speech which he had delivered in the House of Commons barely a year before the outbreak of hostilities : " Suppose we had an invasion by German airplanes, and they succeeded in imposing upon us in this country a German Government, is there any man in this House who thinks that, as soon as the ravages of the invasion had been repaired, the working-classes of this country would be any worse off, economically or socially, under the German Government than under their own British Government to-day ? " To which he added : " The Army and Navy do not exist to protect the working-people." These sentiments were now employed to suggest that he regarded the *present* menace of a German invasion as a matter of indifference to the working-classes of England. Extravagant his speech had

certainly been, but the circumstances in which he made it were very different from those obtaining in 1915 ; not only Snowden, but nearly every other public speaker, had pre-War skeletons—of many and various kinds—in their dialectical cupboard.

He was appointed, three months after his return to England, upon the board established by the Government to control the war-time liquor traffic. This body published Orders which greatly restricted the hours during which drink could be sold on licensed premises ; still more restricted the sale of bottles of liquor for consumption off the premises ; forbade friends to " treat " one another ; permitted the increased dilution of spirits ; and brought clubs under the same restrictions as public-houses. Most of these restrictions are still enforced in some degree.

But Snowden's association with authority went no further. He still refused absolutely to encourage recruiting. " I refuse to ask any young man to sacrifice his life for me," he told a meeting at Blackburn. " I am not going through eternity haunted by the ghosts of slain young men who have lost their lives because of my inducing them to join the army." And two months later in the same town, he declared his belief that there was no possibility of a conclusive end to the War. " Observant people," he said, " realize that there is no

prospect of military victory for either side. That hope having been abandoned, those conducting the War are depending on the economic exhaustion of the Central Powers, a hope just as futile as the other." Events proved him wrong in both these premises, which underlay nearly all his speeches during the War.

"The German people, as distinguished from their ruling class, have shown an overwhelming desire for peace," he went on. "I could quote scores of instances showing that the desire for peace among all the peoples is becoming more pronounced every day." Thousands of letters reached him in these years from people all over the country expressing agreement with his views ; but his correspondents were drawn from only a small proportion of the nation.

His outspoken speeches and articles increased the prejudice against him, but did not cause him in any way to moderate his views. In particular, he opposed the growing demand for conscription. "I am opposed to compulsory military service root and branch," he said at Blackburn, "and under no circumstances will I support its enforcement in this country." The advocates of conscription, he declared, were endeavouring to stampede the country into accepting conscription, not because of any value it might have in the War, but

in order to use it after the War. And rashly he prophesied that conscription would never pass into law, so strong was the opposition to it in the House of Commons.

Wherever he spoke—whether at pacifist meetings or in the House of Commons—he could rarely hope for an uninterrupted hearing. He was involved in argument after argument, scene after scene. "The hon. Member for Blackburn smiles!" exclaimed an angry opponent during the debate on the Munitions Act. "I don't smile; I sneer at you," Snowden retorted.

In February, 1915, a year after his return, he made a long speech in the House of Commons on a vote for an additional £400,000,000 for War purposes. He began by asking whether there was no alternative to this continuous expenditure; no possibility by other means of bringing the War to an honourable end. "I am well aware that I speak to an audience which, in one respect, is out of sympathy with the proposal I make, but I am confident that the House of Commons will extend to me that courtesy and consideration to which all views honestly and reasonably stated are entitled, when they are put forward with an earnest hope of doing something to bring this awful tragedy to an end."

Every Member, he claimed, desired to accomplish

this ; every one was horrified at the loss of life, the suffering and the ruin, which the War had brought about. Whatever differences there might be in the House and elsewhere about the causes and origins of the War, he did not think that this was the time to emphasize them. " The time for that will come ; and then—when the question can be looked at free from passion, and in an atmosphere unclouded by the smoke of battle—blame and responsibility will be justly apportioned." It was Parliament's duty at this moment to do its utmost to bring the War to a quick, a satisfactory and an honourable end.

He went on to say that he and those who shared his general views frankly recognized that in no former struggle had the nation ever given so practical and overwhelming evidence of its belief in the justice and righteousness of its cause. " We are at one with the rest of our fellow-countrymen in earnestly desiring that the noble aims for which these men have offered their lives, and for which the country has made—and appears to be willing to continue to make—unparalleled sacrifices, shall be securely established."

But the way to achieve this would not be by any military victory. He was well aware, he said, of the folly of a premature and inconclusive peace ; but to end such a conflict as this could never be

premature, provided that the peace terms gave the country what it was seeking to obtain by force of arms. "I am sure that those who condemn all peace negotiations now, do so because they believe the time is not opportune. I think I am only doing them justice when I say that, if they could be convinced that peace could be concluded now on such conditions as would give us guarantees against a repetition of this war, they, equally with us, would welcome such a termination of hostilities."

The prolongation of the War, he said, was only justifiable by the reasonable expectation that we could, as a result, dictate such terms to the enemy as would secure the future peace of Europe. This hope he held to be illusory. "I am sure there are few men who, taking an intelligent and dispassionate view of the military situation and of the new experiences which this War has brought, would say that there is any reasonable ground for the hope that a decisive and crushing military victory can come to either of the contending parties."

He quoted from a book—uncannily prophetic, he thought—published at the end of the nineteenth century under the title of "The Future of War": "No decisive war is possible. . . . The men at the front will very speedily be brought to a deadlock. . . . There will be increased slaughter on so terrible a scale as to render it impossible to get

troops to push the battle to a decisive issue. . . . The war will become a kind of stalemate."

Was not this true? Snowden asked. Was there a single member of the Government who believed in his heart that either the Allies or, still less, the Central Powers could achieve a decisive victory?

He waved interjections aside, and turned to his next argument. Some people, he said, suggested that a speedy end to the War might come by the economic collapse of the enemy; but, in his view, by the time the enemy's economies were exhausted, "every other combatant will be practically in the same position." And even if either a military or an economic victory were possible, would it accomplish the objects for which we were fighting? Peace in Europe could not come by this path. Militarism was now utterly discredited; for no great modern nation could conquer or be conquered. "An inconclusive ending of this War, in the sense that all the belligerent nations realize the futility of military power, would be the surest guarantee against a repetition of war."

Already, he claimed, the desire for peace was almost universal among the German people. He quoted the utterances of German Socialist and Liberal newspapers, and of Socialist members of the Reichstag, especially in relation to a recent speech of the German Chancellor, to show the

growth of anti-War feeling in their country, where "every encouragement appears to be given by the authorities for the dissemination of this Socialist demand for peace." Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, had replied to one of Snowden's questions a few weeks previously (the latter reminded the House) that "The Allied Governments would be willing to consider any serious proposals for peace which come from belligerent countries." Well, were there not channels by which this will to peace might be brought into practical contact with peace-feeling in Germany?

"Our Government went a long way before the outbreak of war to avert hostilities, and it is no less important now that we should try to obtain peace than it was then to avert war. No nation is in such a strong position as we are to take that step. No enemy soldiers occupy our land, and our fleet maintains inviolate our national safety." Such a step, he concluded, would be the noblest ever taken by any nation to promote international good-will, by which alone a lasting peace could be obtained.

These, then, were the arguments which Snowden put forward in his first important utterance on the War in the House of Commons. Not unjustly did the Prime Minister, while controverting Snowden's views, comment that "The speech of the

hon. Member not only contained many passages of eloquence and feeling, but deserved—and will, I hope, receive from me—respectful consideration and attention. . . . I know he spoke not only with fervour, but with perfect sincerity."

Snowden never departed far from the attitude which he took up on this occasion. It is clear, from the summary which I have given, that he was not, as his more unscrupulous opponents declared, in favour of peace at any price. Convinced that decisive victory was impossible for either side; that the time was ripe for an armistice; that the Central Powers, like ourselves, loathed the War and genuinely sought an opportunity to end it; that, if a real opportunity were offered, such negotiations must follow as would for ever save Europe from another conflict; he sought to carry out the compact implicit in pre-War international Socialist agreements, by urging upon his own Government the necessity of peace.

It is clear now that he was mistaken. The German people in February, 1916, were as confident of victory, and as determined to achieve it, as they remained up to the very eve of their Revolution; Snowden attached a false importance to the influence of the pacifist section of the German Socialists and, indeed, of that very small section of their people who agreed with them. And on these mistaken

premises his logical mind built up a platform of argument which, of necessity, became more and more remote from reality every time he spoke.

The entrance of Arthur Henderson—one of his oldest colleagues in the House—into the first War Coalition Cabinet, and the adherence of most of the Labour Party to the Government, seemed to Snowden nothing less than treachery to Socialism. Angrily he called them mere office-seekers, just as later he accused other Labour Coalitionist Ministers of having been ready for whatever " dirty work their Tory masters bid them do."

The fall of the Tsarist regime in Russia filled him with hope. At last it seemed as if a democratic government had come into power in one of the fighting countries, which could by its authority restore the others to sanity. In the House of Commons he called upon the Government to issue a declaration, jointly with our other Allies, in agreement with the new Russian Government's slogan of " No annexations and no indemnities."

The new Russian Government, he said, differed so completely from the old that, if we wished to maintain our alliance with Russia, we must put ourselves in line with its declared policy. " It is perfectly clear from all the declarations which come from representative opinion that Russia's mind is now set on peace. That is the dominating

idea. They cannot have a divided mind, and so long as their thoughts are concentrated on the bringing of a democratic peace they will pursue that object ; and in this the Russian democracy is expressing the desire and will of the democracies of all the belligerent countries."

Quoting President Wilson's announcement of the unselfish objects of America's recent entrance into the War, Snowden pointed out that this expressed in another form the same guiding policy. Thus America and Russia were in agreement. In France, whatever divisions there might be between the various sections of the French Socialists, all of them had approved President Wilson's war aims. In Italy the Socialists were practically united in opposition to the continuance of the War ; and even in Belgium, with its very different circumstances, the Socialists had repudiated a war of imperialist annexation.

He turned from the Allies to the enemy countries. Bulgarian Socialists were already on their way to an international conference which the Russians had summoned to Stockholm. The German Socialist groups in the Reichstag, representing about five million votes—" votes which I believe were more anti-militarist than dogmatically Socialist "—were divided on many points, but not about the desirability of peace. Our Government was hoping

for a revolution in Germany, as a result of the dissatisfaction of the people with its rulers : " They have now the means of bringing about that desired Revolution. Let them accept the War policy of the democratic Government of Russia, and let France do the same ; and the consequences upon Germany will be far-reaching."

It was necessary, he went on, to understand that " No annexations and no indemnities " meant exactly what it said. There could be no justification, for instance, for Mr. Arthur Henderson's alleged statement " in an interview which he has given to a Russian newspaper, where he says that he interprets the formula, ' No annexations and no indemnities,' in this way—these are not his exact words, which can be quoted if necessary—but in effect he goes on to say that we must grab as much as we can and we must keep all we grab." (When Henderson saw this attack, he vigorously denounced it as without foundation.)

Then Snowden coined a notable phrase. " Make no mistake about it," he cried ; " it will be a *people's peace !* This War is not going to be settled as other wars have been, by statesmen whose incompetence or criminality made the War. This War is not going to be settled in the secret chambers of diplomacy ; it is going to be settled by the democracies of the different countries."

He was not less energetic in the country than at Westminster. Being once more, in the spring of this year, 1917, elected Chairman of the Independent Labour Party, he took a leading part in the June conference at Leeds convened by that society and the British Socialist Party to celebrate the Russian Revolution, and to emulate it by creating Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in this country. He moved a resolution endorsing the new Russia's declaration of foreign policy and war aims and calling on the British Government to announce its agreement. "For three years," he said, and we are told that the walls of the hall rang to the challenge, "we have been applying to the Government to state their peace terms; the time has come for us to tell the Government what *our* peace terms are!"

He was appointed to the provisional committee of the central Workers' and Soldiers' Council for Great Britain, together with Ramsay MacDonald, George Lansbury, F. W. Jowett, W. C. Anderson, and others.

And in July he told an I.L.P. meeting at Woolwich that a conference was about to be held at which the Socialists of all Europe would be represented. If the British Government would not accept the peace terms proposed at this conference, "Only one thing remains for the people to do—

follow Russia!" He explained on the same occasion that "I do not know that I am exactly what you would call a pacifist, but I belong to the great and growing army of 'fed-ups.'"

The Armistice election of December, 1918, was disastrous for Snowden in Blackburn, as for pacifists everywhere. His stand had offended large numbers of voters in a greatly increased electorate. For some time alternative Socialist candidates, pro-War in their views, had been proposed as his opponents. One of these, Joseph Burgess—who, it may be recalled, was one of the first I.L.P. candidates to stand for Parliament, in 1894—spent sixteen months in the constituency with a view to adoption, ending his stay with a venomous series of articles in a local paper on Snowden's attitude. An organization called the "British Workers' League" threatened to nominate a rival Labour candidate; it was even rumoured locally that Harry Lauder, the Scottish comedian, was eager to stand against Snowden.

When the time came, however, only two rival candidates appeared: Sir Henry Norman and Commander Dean, V.C., as a Coalition Liberal and a Coalition Conservative respectively. Defeat was certain, but Snowden went down with colours flying.

"Not for ten thousand votes," he told his

constituents, "will I apologize for anything I have done, or modify my attitude, or sacrifice my principles in the slightest degree." And he denied proudly that he was under any further obligation to those who had voted him into Parliament at the previous election: "They have conferred no favour on me by voting for me. What they have done has been to mark a ballot-paper; and what I have done has been to work night and day for the last thirteen years trying to promote their interests."

Owing to the delay in collecting the votes of the soldiers abroad, the result of the poll was not declared until a fortnight later. Snowden was at the bottom of the poll with 15,274 votes; against 32,076 cast for Sir Henry Norman, and 30,158 for Commander Dean. His long and notable connection with Blackburn thus ended, as it had begun, in the clouded atmosphere of a "Khaki election." But, at least, the War was over!

CHAPTER XI

IN politics, as at bridge, dummy cannot revoke ; though, unlike in the card-room, he may make as many comments as he likes without having to pay the stakes. For this reason, Snowden's four years' absence from the House of Commons after the 1918 election was not so unfortunate as might at first appear. The memory of his unpopular attitude during the War was given time to fade from the public mind ; nor could he, by speaking in the House of Commons, sting his opponents into constant reminders of it. These four years were also valuable in re-uniting the Labour Party, split upon all problems of the War. Snowden quickly recovered his old ascendancy in the " Movement," now that it was moving again. He remained Chairman of the I.L.P. from 1917 to 1920.

There has probably never been so difficult a period for statesmen to weather in peace-time as the four years after the Armistice. Not merely did the whole of Europe suffer from every conceivable social disease resulting from the disorganization of

the War, but our own internal troubles were immense. Though many mistakes were made, as was inevitable, the record of the Coalition Government was such that unbiased future historians, when the political passions of our time are dead, must applaud the courage and the skill with which it faced, and settled, such unprecedented problems. But what a providential opportunity the situation afforded the Labour Party !

Official Conservatives and official Liberals combined in the Government's vast majority at Westminster ; the only Opposition was that of Labour and of the scanty group of independent Liberals—the " Wee Frees," as they were called. The old Irish Nationalist Party had disappeared. For a while the Wee Frees and the Labour Party wrangled for precedence, but soon they compromised on sharing the privileges of the Official Opposition. Thus the Labour Party had risen in twelve years from the smallest section of the House to one of the most important. Though Snowden, MacDonald, Arthur Henderson and others of its leaders had been defeated, it numbered sixty-three, excluding three Labour men who chose to sit with the Coalition, and ten nominees of the British Workers' League.

The Labour Party could well claim to be the " most considerable Opposition " in the House.

Outside the House, it was the only effective Opposition. Following the lead given by Snowden many years previously, it revised its constitution to appeal to all "workers by hand and brain," and, a clever move, threw open its membership in the constituencies to include individuals as well as groups.

Another accession to its strength was the growing support of the Co-operative Societies. There is no real reason why all members of a Co-operative Society should have the same political views, and should support the Labour Party rather than any other Party, except the old, sentimental legend that the Labour Party protects the interests of the working-classes against the other Parties' villainous attempts to grind the faces of the poor. The Co-operative leaders had founded their own political party in 1917, but were receiving little support from their members; their political ambitions, therefore, were better served by alliance with the Labour Party.

The only cloud on the Labour horizon was the danger of a new split over Bolshevism. The Bolshevists in Russia had lately overthrown the weak Kerensky régime by setting themselves at the head of the anarchic masses of discontented soldiers and workmen. They succeeded for some time in creating, among Socialists abroad, a false

impression of their aims, methods and problems. The Soviet leaders were exceptionally fortunate in finding an audience so eager to be misled : half the Socialists of Europe wanted an opportunity to demonstrate that, no matter how bellicose they had been during the War, they were genuine Socialists at heart ; the other half, who, like Snowden, had remained true to their pre-War protestations of international pacifism, distrusted and instinctively opposed the anti-Bolshevist attitude of the Allied Governments.

Socialists everywhere hugged the belief that Bolshevist Russia was giving birth to that ideal Commonwealth of which they had dreamed all their lives. The various shapes which were taken by the Allies' fear of the spread of Bolshevism into Central and Western Europe, were represented as the relentless efforts of international Capitalism to strangle the infant paradise of democracy. Snowden himself took this line at first, accusing the leaders of British Trade Unionism of playing a contemptible and cowardly part during the attempts of the Allied Governments to re-establish " Monarchy and Capitalism " in Russia. No democrat, he declared, could have observed the apathy and weakness of British Labour during this period without humiliation and shame ; if the Russian Revolution were overthrown, democracy everywhere would

be defeated, for the Allies' interference in Russian affairs was nothing more or less than a prelude to crushing democracy in every country.

Before long, however, it became clear to him that Bolshevist actions by no means corresponded with Bolshevist claims. Apart from other details, not only had the Constituent Assembly been broken up, but a large number of Russian Socialists of irreproachable vision and verbosity had been flung into gaol.

Mrs. Snowden's journey to Russia, as a member of an official British Labour Delegation, gave her husband the advantage of a first-hand account of Bolshevism in practice. To what extent, and how soon, he would have realized the true nature of Bolshevism without this aid, it is impossible to say ; but, as early as December, 1920, only a year after his attack on the weakness of British Labour in regard to the Bolshevists, he had the courage to warn his fellow-Socialists that the Soviet leaders were no true Marxians, and that a great deal of harm had been done to Labour and Socialism in this country by "uncritical support of Bolshevism." No one was surprised, therefore, when he told a large meeting in Edinburgh that "I regard Bolshevism as a most detestable form of government," and when, later, he appealed to the British Government to put pressure on

the Bolshevists to mitigate their persecution of Georgia.*

In the last respect Snowden certainly erred in the opposite direction. The Georgians, a congeries of ancient but only semi-civilized Caucasian tribes, owed to Russia not merely such rudiments of political unity as they possessed, but their very livelihood. Without Russian corn they could not and cannot live ; beyond certain deposits of manganese, and such tolls as they can place upon the oil which passes through their territory from Baku to the Black Sea, they have no effective wealth. But man, we are told, does not live by bread alone —least of all in Georgia, where wine and fat-tailed sheep form the principal luxury of all classes—and her claims to independence were vociferously broadcast on the highly disputable ground that she, unlike Moscow, possessed a truly Social-Democratic government. Russians of all views, however, denied this ; and Georgian independence vanished, despite Snowden's pleas.

Apart from Russia, Snowden, in his four years away from Parliament, 1918–1922, was making plain his views upon other political problems. He became a prominent advocate of a levy on capital. No country in Europe, he insisted, could carry the enormous burden of debt which the War had

* In the House of Commons, July 18th, 1923.

placed on it. Of his views about German Reparations and inter-Allied debts I shall speak later ; in regard to our own National Debt, he declared that a levy on capital was not merely inevitable, but the sooner it was introduced, the better and the cheaper.

It must be remembered that the Capital Levy was not originally a Party issue in British politics. Both Conservatives and Liberals wished it to be seriously examined as a solution of the financial crisis ; when these Parties decided against it, the Labour Party placed it in the forefront of its election programme.

Snowden made it the chief plank in his platform when, after the collapse of the Lloyd George Coalition, he stood in the General Election of 1922 as Labour Candidate for the Colne Valley division, for which he had been adopted in the previous winter. The last time a three-cornered fight had been waged there was in 1910, when Victor Grayson was defeated. Snowden had another sentimental link with the constituency, in that Sir James Kitson, on whose Free Trade resolution he made his maiden speech in Parliament, had also represented it.

The sitting Member was F. W. Mallalieu, a Liberal Coalitionist, who had been elected at the Armistice election by a majority of four thousand votes over the Labour candidate. The Conservative candidate was Major Brooke, a woollen and

worsted manufacturer with old family associations in the Valley.

Snowden opened his campaign at the end of October in the Co-operative Hall, Slaithwaite. "This is my seventh Parliamentary contest," he said, "and in every election I have always determined that I would fight clean and fair. From me there will be no personalities in this election: I shall talk politics; I shall criticize my opponents as politicians; I shall criticize their programme; but in matters outside politics, I shall have nothing to say. I shall fight hard, but I shall hit fair."

As usual, however, a certain amount of heat entered the contest. Snowden and his supporters pointed out that Mr. Mallalieu had voted in only 136 divisions out of 272, which made him, they remarked, little better than half a representative. On the eve of the poll the Liberals retorted with a pamphlet concerning the number of divisions in which Snowden had participated during his last years in Parliament. Their figures were wrong, and Snowden denounced the pamphlet as "scurrilous," "despicable," and "cold, calculated lies." He would never go to Parliament at all, he said, if he had to get votes by such despicable tricks as this. "If there are any honest Liberals in this hall," he cried, "what do you think of your

Liberal candidate now?" And a voice replied unexpectedly, "He's champion!"

Another Liberal in the audience pointed out that, even on his own showing, Snowden's record in divisions was worse than his rival's; when the candidate explained that divisions were no true test of a man's work in Parliament, the heckler retorted, not altogether without reason, "Then why did you start it?"

The Liberals called him a revolutionary. "I have never contended that I am not a revolutionary," Snowden replied. "What is a revolutionary? Revolution means a movement, turning things round; and in that sense I am, and have always been, a revolutionary."

The weather was too bad, however, for much passion. Snowden was able to give his time to advocating the Capital Levy. He denied, for example, that the Levy was confiscation; it was merely "Rendering unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." It would not do the slightest injury to a single man in the country, or rob him of a penny of his honestly earned income, but the Labour Party was "out for those who had stayed at home and enriched themselves out of the War beyond the dreams of avarice"; the Capital Levy was no more confiscation, or repudiation, than a high income-tax.

Our National Debt was £8,000,000,000 ; the people were taxed a million pounds a day to pay the interest on this, and, as nothing was being done to reduce it, the Debt would still be the same in fifty and sixty years. Either, then, it must be drastically reduced by a Capital Levy, or the poor housewives of the Colne Valley and elsewhere must continue to pay a million pounds a week in taxes on sugar, tea and cocoa.

So long as the Levy was not introduced and the Debt remained, Snowden explained, working-men would not be able to say, with M. Coué, when they woke up, " Every day and in every way I am getting better and better," but " I have got to work two hours to-day as my share of interest on the National Debt, before there is a penny for myself."

It is typical of Snowden that, whereas other Labour men in the country began timidly to hedge on the Capital Levy issue, and asserted that their Party was only suggesting it but was not committed to it, he stood firm in its support.

He claimed also to be " a man of peace." Had the Government listened to him before the War, he said, there would not have been a million graves in France. He stood for the League of Nations as the only practical means by which international questions could be settled. The League should appoint, for example, a committee of experts and

financiers to prepare a scheme for the settlement of Reparations, inter-Allied debts, and the economic restoration of Europe ; and take these questions out of the incompetent hands of the Allies ' representatives in Paris.

He told another audience that the Liberal Party, having outrun its sphere of usefulness, should give way now to Labour, which gave better expression to the needs of the time.

The poll was declared on November 16th. Snowden had 12,614 votes, against 11,332 for Major Brooke, and only 8,042 for Mallalieu. " We have won on peace, the Capital Levy and unemployment," he announced. And at his principal club he pointed out that, as a result of this General Election, every prominent member of the War-time pacifist group would go back to the House. " You never lose in the long run by sticking to your convictions."

The Labour Party returned to the House with more than 140 Members, thus for the first time outnumbering the Liberals, who had 117 adherents, while 344 Conservatives formed the Government. Snowden, sixteen years after his first coming to Westminster, took his seat on the Front Opposition Bench, recognized by all as certain to become Chancellor of the Exchequer if, and when, his Party came to power. He had not long to wait.

Early in the new Parliament Snowden spoke on Mr. Baldwin's Budget, and uttered a characteristic denunciation of the Government's proposals for a tax on betting : " I confess that I have heard with dismay, amounting almost to horror, the expressions of sympathy in favour of a tax on betting. Has this great country come to this : have our resources in moral and legitimate forms of taxation become so exhausted that a Chancellor of the Exchequer must have recourse to patronizing, legalizing and making respectable what is perhaps the second greatest curse of this country, a curse which is every week ruining homes and blighting promising careers ? I am sure that the Right Hon. Gentleman knows little of the outbreak of moral indignation which would occur in this country if Government or Parliamentary sanction should be given to, or even if the proposals should be put forward by a Cabinet for, a tax on betting."

A month later he inaugurated a notable debate. Winning a place in the ballot for Private Members' Motions, he moved a resolution that :

> " In view of the failure of the Capitalist system to adequately utilize and organize the natural resources of productive power, or to provide the necessary standards of life for vast numbers of the population, and believing that

the cause of this failure lies in the private ownership and control of the means of production and distribution, this House declares that legislative effort should be directed to the gradual supersession of the Capitalist system by an industrial and social order based on the public ownership and democratic control of the instruments of production and distribution."

In a speech which Sir Philip Lloyd-Greame, the President of the Board of Trade, afterwards described as "of great interest and great moderation," Snowden indicted the Capitalist system to a crowded House. He admitted, at the outset, that his opponents were as honest and as sympathetic towards social problems as the Socialists. "Sympathy is not the monopoly of the Socialist Party"; differences arose only about the best means of improving the conditions of industry and society.

The test of any economic system must be: Does it deliver the goods; does it fulfil its functions; does it give the people a good world to live in? Judged by these standards, he argued, Capitalism had failed. Despite all the wonderful mechanical inventions of the past century, the wealth produced by each member of the population engaged in productive work amounted now to the value of only £110; no fewer than a million and

a half men were out of work ; agricultural labourers were, at that very moment, striking to resist the imposition of a wage of twenty shillings a week—equivalent to only fourteen shillings at pre-War rates ; the Capitalist system could not keep harmony between employers and employed, so that more than two thousand industrial disputes were taking place every year ; in housing too and in health the results of the present industrial system were lamentable. Eighty-eight per cent. of the wealth of the country was owned by two and a half per cent. of the population ; while five out of every six died penniless.

He recalled that, thirty years before, when he began his career as a Socialist agitator, he was always met by arguments in favour of the value of competition. But to-day the Capitalists themselves were eradicating competition by the institution of Trusts. He smiled. " Suppose a worker succeeds in saving two or three hundred pounds, let him start business as a chemical manufacturer in competition with Brunner Mond ; and he will very soon get all the advantages of Capitalism, and have opened to him the avenues of private enterprise ! "

An interrupter asked what the Socialists' remedy was. Snowden proceeded to tell him. It was neither confiscatory nor revolutionary. " There is

no analogy between Socialism and Bolshevism. Socialism and Bolshevism are antitheses. I hope that hon. Members will forgive me when I tell them that Bolshevism, both in its political theories and its practice, and in its ideal of dictatorship and confiscation, is not Socialism, but die-hard Toryism."

For years now the State had been dealing with the failure of private enterprise. "There are three or four ways in which we have been dealing with the Capitalist system, and all we suggest is that we should continue on these lines, but move much more rapidly. We are not advocates of confiscation or of resort to force, and, though I am speaking for myself, I think I shall carry the approval of all members of my Party when I say that we want no further step forward until the previous step which we took has been justified by its success."

The Government and the municipalities were constantly repairing and supplementing the defects of Capitalism; the community had been forced to take over big undertakings and work them; municipal enterprise stood head and shoulders above private concerns engaged in similar work. Sir Alfred Mond (now Lord Melchett) was to move the principal amendment; Snowden paid him a compliment: "I assure the Right Hon. Gentleman

that, when the Socialist State comes into being, he need have no fear, because his great abilities, his wonderful mental capacities, and his great organizing skill will find abundant scope for their activities in organizing Socialist enterprises." Then with a reference to the swift growth of the Labour Party and a final challenge to the upholders of the Capitalist creed, he sat down.

The rest of the debate need not be detailed here, although it so interested the House that an additional day for its continuance was granted by the Government. Sir Alfred Mond's speech, however, must be mentioned briefly. He claimed that Snowden had indicted, not Capitalism, but civilization. "Will the hon. Member tell me that, under a Socialist system, there would be no diseased children and no drunkards in the world?" Like the vendors of a patent medicine, he said, the Socialists painted a lurid picture of the illness, but spoke very little about the remedy. "The real point of modern industrial enterprise is management, and that is really the key upon which the hon. Gentleman did not touch." No matter whether an industry was private or public, if it was mismanaged, it would fail; with the difference that a private failure led the culprits to the bankruptcy court.

He told of his father and Sir John Brunner

setting up business with their small savings fifty years before, to work a new process at which experts laughed. Such was the origin of the vast firm of Brunner Mond. Who under Socialism would have taken the risk of launching the new enterprise, in the face of expert derision? Nor had competition disappeared from industry; any firm, no matter how important, which failed to keep pace with scientific progress, would go out of business in twenty years. In conclusion, he preached co-operation between labour and capital as an alternative to Socialism.

These two admirable, if somewhat academic, speeches inaugurated a debate which ended, after the second day, in a vote of 123 for Snowden's motion, and 369 for Sir Alfred Mond's amendment.

The comparative moderation of Snowden's views astonished many Conservatives who heard him; they had not followed his more recent speeches and writings. Several sedative influences were now at work in the Labour Party. In the first place, the possibility of coming into power before very long forced upon its leaders a greater feeling of responsibility. Then their realization of the truth about Bolshevism made it essential to demonstrate the fundamental difference between it and their own tenets. Thirdly, they sought to attract not merely

the Radicals—it had them already in large part—but as many also of the moderate Liberals as might see in the Labour Party a surer means of opposing reaction.

Snowden recapitulated his creed in a book "Labour and the New World," published shortly before his return to Parliament. Although, only a year before, at Glasgow, he had said that he did not want to see either the mines or the railways nationalized, "if Nationalization means management by such a Government as we have to-day," he continued in his book to advocate Nationalization as if it were an ethical rather than a practical problem of economics. He once more declared that an Empire was an expensive luxury for a commercial country. He insisted, as an argument against the Bolshevists, that it was futile to attempt completely to overthrow Capitalism in one country while the system still controlled the rest of the world.

On Temperance, however, his views had grown sterner. He believed that the example of Prohibition in America would profoundly impress public opinion in Great Britain. Since, therefore, Prohibition had become a matter of practical politics, he saw no need to continue advocating the public ownership and control of the drink trade, and chose instead to support Local Option, Sunday

closing, and various other minor forms of partial interference with the private sale of liquor.

But to the essential basis of his Socialism he held firm. He adhered to his old, optimistic belief in the coming of a better world, or, as he called it, a New Order. The persistence of idealism, he argued, proved that the instinct of justice was fundamental in human nature ; which, of itself, ensured that some day the "ideal" would be realized. This basic truth (as his supporters would call it), or basic fallacy (as others think) was still, as it had ever been and has remained, the guiding star of all his thoughts and actions.

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CHAPTER XII

THE first Labour Government in English history took office in January, 1924, with Philip Snowden as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Baldwin, his Party still split by the quarrels resulting from the break-up of the Coalition, had gone to the country in December on an ill-advised policy of fiscal reform. The new House consisted of 258 Conservatives, 191 Labour men, 158 Liberals and a handful of Independents. It is interesting to learn from a pamphlet " If Labour Rules," which Snowden had lately published, what his views of the immediate future were. In the event, he said, of Labour being the largest individual Party of the three, but without a clear majority over the others, it would presumably be called upon to form a Government, but the situation would be full of embarrassment. Not merely would the formation of a Ministry in these conditions provide no test of what a Labour Government with a clear majority could do, but it would weaken the Party's status and cause dissension among its supporters in the

country. It would probably so discredit the Party as to postpone indefinitely the day when Labour obtained a clear majority in the House.

Still more disastrous, he warned his readers, would be a progressive coalition with the Liberals ; the Labour Party's "independence", could not survive such a strain. He pointed out that, in the event of no Party having a clear majority, a Liberal-Conservative Coalition — Winston Churchill's "Central Party"—might be re-formed. This would probably be the very best thing that could happen for the future of the Labour Party, to hasten its chances of a clear majority. Even so, no greater peril could befall the Party than to gain a clear majority and form a Ministry on a passing wave of popular dissatisfaction with the two older Parties ; public opinion would turn against it as swiftly as it had inclined towards it.

Nevertheless, when Labour and Liberals combined in the House to defeat Mr. Baldwin, and the King sent for Ramsay MacDonald, Snowden took office in the new Ministry. He had found little difficulty in retaining his seat for the Colne Valley division in the General Election. Of all the contests in which he had participated, this was certainly the least eventful.

Major Brooke stood once more against him as a Conservative, while the Liberal candidate was

Percy Heffer, a London manufacturer practically unknown in the constituency. Snowden was, perhaps, more than usually reminiscent in his speeches, telling his audiences how he had been in the Labour Party from its birth and had watched it grow " from the small mustard-seed to the great and wonderful tree " ; sometimes he repeated, almost word for word, passages of speeches many years old. He remarked also that, since a General Election was sometimes called " an inquest by the nation," the country's verdict on Mr. Baldwin's appeal to it would surely be " Suicide in a fit of insanity." He was returned with an increased majority, polling 13,316, to the Conservative's 11,332, and the Liberal's 8,402.

Mr. MacDonald was wise to form a Government. " *L'appétit vient en mangeant* " is as true of politics as elsewhere. A taste of responsibility was certain to raise both the hopes and the prestige of political Labour. The new Premier insisted at all times that, being in a minority of the House and dependent on Liberal votes for survival, his administration could not hope to do much more than prove the future desirability of a majority Labour Government. As an earnest of his moderation, he included in his Cabinet a large proportion—nine out of twenty—of men who, like Lords Haldane, Parmoor and Chelmsford, could not under any

circumstances be considered extremists, and a Co-operative M.P. became Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade. Though their inclusion gave offence to some of the old-timers in the Labour Movement, it was certainly a tactical success. Also, Mr. MacDonald stated that the Capital Levy would have to be definitely approved by a majority in the country before an attempt was made to introduce it.

Nor was Snowden's eagerly anticipated Budget likely to cause alarm among the opponents of Socialism. He introduced it on April 29th, 1924, prefacing his speech with an appeal for sympathy and indulgence on the ground that "I am the first Chancellor of the Exchequer, in this generation at least, who has taken on the responsibility of the office without previous Ministerial experience." He had, moreover, been in office only a very few weeks at the end of the financial year.

In another respect, he continued, his position was most embarrassing; he had ex-Chancellors to the right of him, and ex-Chancellors in front of him; but he hoped that when, during the later course of the debate, "these big guns begin to volley and thunder, they will, out of the goodness of their hearts, have compassion on my youth and inexperience." As Snowden was now in his sixtieth year, this whimsical appeal set the House in a good humour.

After a long exposition of the financial position, he asked the patience of his listeners for a few minutes while he referred to the proposals of the late Government to extend Imperial Preference. It had appealed to the country, he said, with various proposals for tariff reform ; and the increase of existing preferences within the Empire had been one of the issues of the General Election. " The result of that appeal is well known and, obviously, cannot be ignored. But apart from that, we, on this side of the House, though not for a single moment admitting that we are one whit behind hon. Gentlemen opposite in our desire to promote the best interests of the Empire, have never believed that those interests would be best served in the long run by a system of tariff preference." The new Government, therefore, could not endorse its predecessor's proposals ; if the Dominions and Colonies were disappointed by this, the fault lay with those who had raised false hopes.

After this political thrust, Snowden turned to his definite intentions, of which I need mention only the more significant. He intended to reduce the duties on tea, sugar, cocoa, coffee, chicory and dried fruits, claiming that " These proposals are the greatest step ever made towards the realization of the cherished Radical ideal of a free breakfast-table," and that they would " give some

benefit to every man, woman and child in the country."

He roused good-natured laughter by announcing the abolition of the duties upon sweetened mineral waters—a measure most gratifying to all teetotallers and Temperance reformers. He then reduced the tax on tickets for entertainments, which had been instituted as a War-time measure. Although, he said, he believed that he was the only member in the House to oppose the tax when it was first introduced, he was not in a position to propose its total repeal. The reductions which he made would apply to the cheaper seats.

Then he announced the repeal of the McKenna Duties, which were introduced during the War by Mr. McKenna, a Free Trade Chancellor, chiefly for revenue purposes, on foreign motor-cars, clocks and watches, cinematograph films and musical instruments. He was not inclined, he said, amid interruptions from the Conservatives, to argue whether their retention for revenue purposes was good or bad ; the important thing was that the country, at the recent General Election, had declared against all such protective measures. Another tax to be repealed was the Corporation Profits Tax, a measure unpopular with all political sections.

He came now to land valuation and land taxation, questions so dear to his heart ever since his earliest

days as a student of politics. Mr. Lloyd George's scheme of land taxation in the 1909 Budget had been repealed by its author after the War ; Snowden announced that new proposals would be introduced in their stead. "Speaking on this subject a year ago, I said that, when we sat on the Government benches, we should deal with this question. We intend to do so." But there had not yet been time to prepare everything ; a certain amount of preliminary work was already in progress, and the Government intended in the near future to introduce a separate Bill.

In conclusion, he claimed that his Budget was "vindictive against no class, and against no interests. Though I have always held and declared that the State has the right to call upon the whole of the available resources of its citizens in case of national need, I have equally held and declared that it has no right to tax anybody, unless it can show that the taxation is likely to be used more beneficially and more economically." Then, having spoken for one hour and three-quarters, he fell back limp and exhausted into his seat, loudly applauded by the House.

It was not a sensational Budget. The "City" was reassured. Fears that Snowden would attempt a revolutionary change in the national economies proved to be groundless ; his proposals might

have been made by any orthodox Free Trade Liberal.

Compliments poured in on him. Austen Chamberlain, a Conservative ex-Chancellor, passed a hasty note of praise along the benches to Snowden, who read it, flushing with pleasure. Sir Robert Horne, another Conservative ex-Chancellor, and the first to speak in the debate, insisted that, "During the time I have been in the House, I do not think we have ever heard a more clear or perspicuous statement with regard to our national finance." It being the custom of Parliament to postpone detailed discussion of a Budget until the second day of the debate, he would remark now only that "We are here rather to praise Cæsar than to bury him. The second part of the process will, no doubt, take place on some later occasion." Mr. Asquith, the leader of the Liberals, expressed "on behalf of myself and my colleagues, our extreme satisfaction, not only at the admirable lucidity and cogency, which I have rarely heard surpassed during a great many Budgets, of the introduction of this most complicated and difficult of all tasks ; but also on the fact, so far as I can form a judgment, that the Budget proceeds upon thoroughly sound financial lines."

After this benediction of Snowden by the foremost champion of Free Trade, it was hardly

surprising that the Cobden Club, whose members might reasonably regard themselves as the high priests of the Free Trade doctrine, gave Snowden a dinner on July 1st. In his speech there he declared that no guest of the Club had ever been a sounder Free Trader than he—and, he wished to assure them, "The Chancellor of the Exchequer is quite as good a Free Trader as Philip Snowden." Free Trade, he said, meant much more than free imports; it meant freedom in industry, while Protection might mean either the protection of selfish interests, or the protection of the community against selfish interests. He thus neatly avoided the awkward task of attempting to reconcile his hosts' fanatical adherence to Cobdenite Individualism with his own Collectivist theories.

A fortnight later he visited Cowling, his birthplace, for the first time since he had become Chancellor. He motored over from Huddersfield; his car was met by the local Temperance Brass Band and escorted by the whole village to the United Methodist schoolroom. In thanking his friends, Snowden said that the old Yorkshire motto, "Say nowt and give nowt," was the best possible motto for a Chancellor, and told them of a woman who had approached him after his first electoral success at Blackburn in 1906 with the appeal, "You *will* fight for the poor, won't you?" This,

he claimed, he had always tried to do, and he could desire no better inscription on his tombstone than this : " He worked for the poor."

At Westminster, as he had foreseen, the Labour Government had few opportunities to change the course of our social policy. One of its junior members, Major Haden Guest, the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Ministry of Health—who, by the way, had accompanied Mrs. Snowden on her Russian tour and found himself in large agreement with her about the Bolshevist regime—has gone so far as to state that the " only really constructive proposal " of the Ministry's first session was the agreement reached *outside Parliament* between John Wheatley, the Minister of Health, and the building trade. To Major Guest also we owe the revealing information that the Emergency Powers Act, afterwards employed by the Conservative Government during the General Strike of 1926, was largely shaped by the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General of the first Labour Government.

There is no need to recapitulate here the series of events which drove Mr. MacDonald out of power. The Russian Treaty and the Zinoviev letter are already ancient history. More interesting for our present purpose is a statement made during the course of the election by Snowden in a speech at Paisley. He had happened to remark

that, "We are all familiar with the phrase, 'The overthrow of the Capitalist System.'" "Hear, hear," came a sarcastic interjection from an impatient Socialist. "That observation," snapped Snowden, "would carry far more illumination, and would be far more educative, if it were accompanied by some glimmer of a scheme by which the destruction of Capitalism is to be achieved."

A social revolution, he went on, is the culmination of a series of evolutionary processes, aided by the use of political means; the programme of any effective Labour Government must be based on an understanding of these evolutionary forces which, in their culmination, would constitute the social revolution. He reiterated his distrust of direct revolutionary action, so popular among the extremists on the Clyde. The work of the next Labour Government, he said, must consist of carrying through, or attempting to carry through, great schemes which would *gradually*, but fundamentally, change the economic structure of Society.

But the next Labour Government was postponed for some years by the result of the election. The Labour Party, for the first time since 1910, lost strength; it returned with 152 as against 191 members. (Snowden, however, increased his majority to 3,243.) The Liberals suffered even more

severely ; only forty-two went back in place of nearly four times that number. The Conservatives with more than four hundred seats had an enormous advantage over both other parties. Winston Churchill became Chancellor of the Exchequer, crossing swords on innumerable occasions with Snowden, his counterpart in the Labour " Shadow Cabinet " and on the Front Opposition Bench.

This rivalry has lasted until the present day, and is likely to continue. Honours are fairly even between the two protagonists, each outstanding among his colleagues in ability and debating skill. Conservatives delight in the fierce assaults which Churchill delivers upon his opponent ; Socialists are gratified when Snowden, taking impish advantage of the mercurial nature and expressive features of his adversary, baits him like a dog worrying a badger.

In November, 1925, the town of Keighley, where he had begun his political career, conferred its freedom on Snowden " in recognition of his distinguished Parliamentary career." In returning thanks, he reiterated his view that the House of Commons was the most wonderful and the most democratic assembly in the world. Wealth, birth and social position counted for nothing ; the only things that mattered were a man's capacity, his knowledge, and his character.

The General Strike of 1926 brought consternation to the political leaders of Labour. So unexpected was it, says Haden Guest, that both meetings of the Labour Members at Westminster in the previous week had been chiefly occupied by quarrels over the morality of the Government's proposal for a tax on betting. Snowden disapproved of strikes. As far back as 1912, in his book "The Living Wage," he had endeavoured to prove that they never bring substantial gain to those participating in them; that no strike can be successful unless it is supported by public opinion; and that the extreme Socialists' desire to settle industrial disputes by a contest of endurance was strangely incompatible with their demand for the compulsory submission of international disputes to arbitration. More recently he had quoted Walter Scott's dictum that "War is the only game from which both sides rise the losers," applying it to the industrial strife of strikes and lock-outs.

Two statements on the same topics at other times may be mentioned here. In a speech at Derby, a year after the General Strike, Snowden said that it was one thing to recognize the theoretical existence of the "Class War," but quite another to regard it as the basis of Trades Union and Socialist policy; the purpose of Socialism was to abolish all classes, and the Socialist State would

never come into being until the people realized that "We are all members of one another, and the interests of each are the interests of all."

And at Hastings he told his audience that it was sheer nonsense to suppose that the condition of the working-classes could not be improved without overthrowing the Capitalist system. Certainly, he admitted, our industrial system must be radically changed if harmony was to be established among all those concerned in it; there was bound to be strife while one of the necessary partners, Capital, remained a dictator, and the other, Labour, was placed in a position of servility. Business must be recognized as a collective enterprise, in which Capital and Labour were essential factors; their stakes must be equal—the workers should become capitalists, and the capitalists workers.

Another Yorkshire honour came to him in July, 1927, when the University of Leeds made him an honorary LL.D. Professor Abercrombie, in a speech of appreciation, insisted that nothing was so heartening to the pride of Yorkshiremen as such a career as Snowden's who, entirely by his own efforts and his own merits, and without any advantages of wealth or influence, had raised himself to a position of conspicuous eminence in the great affairs of his country.

While this sentiment must commend itself to moderate men of all Parties, it did not appear to do so in the bosom of the Independent Labour Party, which had now fallen under the control of the more revolutionary section of the Labour Movement, and had as its chairman James Maxton, M.P., a fanatical adherent of "Socialism in our time." Relations had been growing more and more strained between the I.L.P. and Snowden, its ex-chairman. At last, in December, 1927, Snowden announced his resignation from the society, after a membership of thirty-three years. He gave as his reasons that the I.L.P. had become "neither necessary nor useful" as a separate body, and that, ever since the Labour Party had opened its ranks to individual members and adopted a definitely Socialist programme, it was fulfilling all the purposes of the original I.L.P.

In acknowledging Snowden's resignation, the financial secretary of the I.L.P. pointed out that, in 1922, three years after these changes in the Labour Party's constitution, Snowden and the other members of the Council of the I.L.P. had passed a resolution that "The continued existence of the I.L.P. is necessary if a Socialist Movement is to be maintained in this country." But Snowden was not to be turned from his decision.

It is more than a coincidence that this break with

the society in which he had begun his propagandist career, and through which he had risen to such prominence in the ranks of political Labour, should have come at a moment when he was about to advance from the semi-obscurity of British Socialism into the blaze of world-wide publicity. The man who, at the Hague, earned the applause of every political party and every periodical in the country —except the I.L.P.'s *New Leader*—was no longer the rathe enthusiast who had roused local Socialist audiences with denunciations of the "idle rich" and appeals for the down-trodden poor. Responsibility and power have ripened him from an agitator to a statesman.

Well might he say jocularly to a deputation which called on him in 1929 after his appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the second Labour Ministry, that "It would be desirable if every Government, when it comes into power, should have its old speeches burned."

CHAPTER XIII

AS the recognized economic expert of the Labour Party, Snowden had from the very end of the War made a special study of the question of inter-Allied Debts and German Reparations. His attitude was consistent from the outset, as will be seen from the following account of the negotiations at the Hague Conference in August, 1929.

At the conclusion of the War Germany admitted liability for Reparations, and in 1921 the Reparations Committee sat to assess the sum. Her obligations were then fixed at the immense total of £6,600 millions, which would have amply covered the debts of Great Britain to the United States of America, and of the other Allies to both Great Britain and America. It had already been agreed at the 1920 Conference at Spa that whatever Germany paid, should be divided among the Allies in accordance with certain percentages based on their various claims: Great Britain was to receive 23·4 per cent.; and France 52 per cent. These percentages provided a basis for all future

negotiations : they were recognized as fundamentally just ; and no attempt was made to set them aside until (in 1929) the Young Committee sought to alter them to the disadvantage of England.

It was largely in protest against this departure from a basis which had been recognized for the previous nine years that Snowden opposed the Young Scheme at The Hague.

Many economists—Snowden among them—argued that Germany would never be able to pay a debt of £6,600 millions, the annual interest on which, at even 5 per cent., would have amounted to £330 millions ; while, even if she paid, the creditor countries could not take payment without creating a financial and economic crisis throughout Europe. As Snowden pointed out, both during and after the War, the whole question of indemnities (by whatever name they go) is so complex that almost any solution was likely to be as disadvantageous to the victors as to the vanquished. In 1922, therefore, the British Government courageously endeavoured to cut the tangle with a hint that Britain would cancel all her claims on Germany, and all the Allied debts to herself, if America and the other creditor countries would do the same. This offer, however, was unfavourably received ; and, instead, the Balfour Note was despatched, by

which England agreed to ask no more from the Germans and the Allies than she owed to America.

England had lent her Allies—chiefly France and Italy—£2,000 millions during the War. Her decision to ask no more from them and the Germans than she had to pay America meant a reduction of British claims from £3,000 millions to less than £1,000 millions, which was the British debt to America. In pursuance of this principle England made settlement of the French and Italian debts to her on terms extremely favourable to those countries. Of the French debt, England agreed to receive only 42½ per cent. of what France actually owed. To be precise, France's total debt to England was just under £600 millions, which, if paid off by annuities, would amount, with the interest, to just under £800 millions. But the total value of the annuities finally decided upon was only a little more than £255 millions.

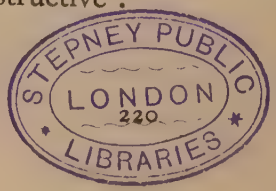
Italy was treated even more leniently. Her original debt to England was £588 millions. England was content to settle on a basis which represented a reduction to only 15 per cent., or less than a sixth. As Snowden in Opposition never wearied of pointing out, British leniency towards these Allies, who were so reluctant to pay their debts, was quite extraordinary by comparison

with the arrangements she had made for the settlement of her own vast debt to America, which represented a reduction of only 18 per cent. of the anticipated sum.

In consequence of the agreements which England has made with France, Italy, and the other Allies to whom she lent money during the War, she should receive a total of approximately £18 millions a year. But this represents only about half what she has annually to pay America. If even the meagre demands of the Balfour Note, therefore, are to be fulfilled—namely, that England shall receive as much as she has to pay—it is essential that she should receive the balance direct from Germany on account of Reparations.

As a matter of fact, England has never yet received sufficient from the Germans and the Allied debtors to balance her American payments, the chief of several reasons for this being that her debt agreements with the Allies were delayed, and were finally settled a considerable time after the arrangement with America.

The year 1923–24 was the first in which British payments were made to America. The following figures, each representing millions of pounds sterling, are instructive :


STEPNEY PUBLIC LONDON 220 LIBRARIES

	British Payments to America.	British Receipts from Debts and Reparations.	Adverse Balance.
1923–24	- 41	2·6	38·4
1924–25	- 36·4	16·4	20
1925–26	- 33·3	14·9	18·4
1926–27	- 33·1	26·3	6·8
1927–28	- 32·8	25·2	7·6
	176·6	85·4	91·2

Thus England's total adverse balance over these five years amounts to about £91 millions; if interest is reckoned at the rate of 5 per cent., including the year 1928–29, this figure approximates to £116 millions.*

Although neither Europe nor America would accept the English proposal of 1922 for the all-round cancellation of Debts and Reparations, all parties admitted that the figure fixed in the previous year as the sum which Germany must pay—£6,600 millions—was impracticable. In 1924, therefore, a committee was set up under the chairmanship of General "Hell and Maria" Dawes, who has since become American ambassador to England, to review the whole question of Reparations. This committee reduced the German annual payment to

* This does not include the amount paid to America in 1920-21 as the British share of the Anglo-French 5 per cent. loan raised in 1915; which would bring the total to approximately £200 millions.

a maximum of £125 millions, compared with the £330 millions due under the previous estimate. This annuity was, of course, to be divided among the Allies on the basis of the Spa percentages. The Dawes Committee also drew up a scheme for German payment to be partly in goods, and at the same time set up machinery under the direction of the Agent-General for Reparations to control German payments. But even the Dawes annuity was considered by many economists to be too large.

Also, as Snowden was later to point out at The Hague, German payment in goods must bear adversely on British trade because the goods which Germany exports are, in large measure, directly competitive with our own. For example, the shipment of German coal to Italy on account of Reparations meant the loss to South Wales of the whole Italian coal-market. The Dawes Scheme, therefore, though certainly an advance on previous arrangements, provided no more than a temporary basis of agreement. Germany appeared to be unable to pay the £125 millions a year, except by borrowing in America.

Moreover, there was no finality about the Dawes Scheme ; neither Germany nor her creditors knew how long she was to continue these annuities, or what her total debt was considered to be. To solve these problems the Young Committee met

in 1929. It proposed that Germany should pay an average of £100 millions a year for thirty-six years, and £70 millions a year for twenty-two years afterwards.

But, once again, the new arrangement was unsatisfactory. It was all very well to fix sums and terms of years, but the dual difficulty remained of Germany's inability to pay and her creditors' reluctance to encourage her competition. In the first place, the new Young annuity was considered too high ; it was agreed that two-thirds of the sum might be postponed for two years if conditions in Germany were unfavourable. These two-thirds were termed " conditional " ; the one-third " unconditional." On the other hand, it was perfectly obvious that, out of the reduced payments, the various creditor countries must receive smaller total amounts. Neither France nor Italy, however, was ready to accept such proportional reductions. They would only undertake to allow the German annuity to be reduced to £100 millions on condition that England, despite her previous concessions, agreed to receive less than the 23·4 per cent. of German Reparations to which the Spa percentages entitled her.

Had those percentages remained, England would at last obtain, in Reparations and Allied debts, more than sufficient to cover her payments to

America. The balance would have been available to make up some of the deficit of £116 millions lost in the five years after 1923–24. With a somewhat disingenuous side glance at the Balfour Note, France and Italy proposed that England should receive only enough to balance her immediate payments to America, leaving the £116 millions to be written off as a bad debt.

Anxious presumably for a settlement at almost any cost, and hampered by the death of the senior British representative, Lord Revelstoke, in the middle of the negotiations, the British experts accepted this proposal, thus abandoning the Spa percentages as the determinants of all Reparation settlements.

So satisfactory was this to France that she pressed her demands further. She wished to be able to raise a loan on the security of her receipts from Germany, and claimed in consequence a first charge on the "unconditional" Reparations before she would agree to withdraw her troops from the occupied Rhineland. She wanted 80 per cent., instead of her normal 52 per cent., of the "unconditional" annuity, taking, of course, a smaller proportion of the "conditional" payment. To this also the British experts agreed.

Finally, to add to England's misfortunes, the Young Committee decided that payment of Repara-

tions in kind should be continued for another ten years on a declining scale and, for the first time, permitted the nations receiving these goods to re-sell them. To this also the British experts agreed, although a consequence would have been that Italy, besides obtaining from Germany, on Reparations account, all the coal she needed for her own use, could take considerably more and sell it in world-markets in competition with British coal.

Such, then, was the position when Snowden, as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the second Labour Government, went to the Hague in August, 1929. England, which had sacrificed 57 per cent. of her debt from France, and 85 per cent. of her debt from Italy, and had paid America in five years £91 millions (with the interest, £116 millions) more than she had received in Allied debts and Reparations, was asked to make still further sacrifices.

On August 6th, 1929, at the first plenary session of the Hague Conference, Snowden declared his dissatisfaction with the Young Plan. He objected to the alteration of the Spa percentages; the arrangements for deliveries in kind; and the new suggestions for distributing the "unconditional" and "conditional" German annuities.

He ended his speech, which demonstrated the British Government's intention to repudiate their experts' tentative agreement, by a firm declaration

of policy : " You will forgive me if I appear to speak with great firmness in regard to the distribution of annuities. The House of Commons will never agree to any further sacrifice of British interests in this matter. There are no divisions between the Parties on this question. We are agreed, and, as you all know, all Parties are agreed upon this : We are prepared to wipe the slate clean of all international debts and all Reparations. That was promised in the Balfour Note. It was the declaration of our Party before we came into power. But, so long as Reparations are paid and received, so long as debts are payable, Great Britain and every Government in Great Britain would insist upon her being fairly treated in this matter."

The Conference then formed two committees, one political and the other financial. Arthur Henderson, the new British Foreign Minister, took his seat on the former ; Snowden and William Graham (who had been Financial Secretary to the Treasury under him in 1924, and was now the President of the Board of Trade) sat on the Financial Committee.

The Financial Committee met on August 8th. Snowden reiterated his views, to the dismay of those foreign delegates who had hoped that his first speech was mere " window-dressing," preliminary to concessions. The British delegation,

he said, must have an assurance that a decision would be reached upon the three disputed points, before it could take any further part in the discussions. He had laid all his cards on the table, and the committee must please understand that he proposed to play the hand. "I have behind me the unanimous support of my Government, the support of the House of Commons irrespective of Party, and the support, I believe, of the whole of the people of Great Britain. Upon this matter we cannot compromise."

The fat was in the fire. The French and Italian press, whose views on such matters are not without an official tinge, burst out in its wrath, calling Snowden a Shylock and other even less appropriate epithets, among them "Jingo," "Nationalist," "Chauvinist," "Philistine," "Undiplomatic," "Brutal," "Miserly," "Dictatorial," and "Kaiser-like." The Paris authorities, fearing public disturbances, forbade the exhibition in cinematograph theatres of topical films in which he appeared. By way of comic relief, a French humorous artist drew a picture of a couple of Frenchmen deciding in a café that "There is only one thing left—we must occupy Yorkshire!" Pessimists predicted that the Conference would break down.

Two days later the Financial Committee met again, and Mr. Graham put the English case.

M. Chéron, the French Finance Minister, followed with a spate of statistics, which brought Snowden to his feet. The latter opened with a phrase which the discerning correspondent of *The Times* described as "already well known at The Hague to precede one of his biting declarations." It was, "I hope that I shall not be considered discourteous if——" and he went on to say that M. Chéron's speech had taken him by surprise, in that it broadened the discussion beyond the subjects which were understood to be within its immediate sphere.

He added that he did not accept the accuracy of the figures which the Frenchman had presented, and that M. Chéron's interpretation of the Balfour Note was "grotesque." When the Conference broke up, the French made a furious complaint, not easily intelligible to the ordinary student, that the adjective "grotesque" bore a particularly discourteous significance in French. As soon as this was brought to Snowden's notice, he explained good-humouredly that the offence was purely philological, and that he had, of course, no wish to hurt M. Chéron's feelings.

Adjournment for four days gave the various delegations time to consider. The Belgian Prime Minister, M. Jaspar, and a Japanese delegate endeavoured to mediate between Snowden and the French, but soon discovered that Snowden

was not a man to be turned from his purpose. He sent M. Jaspar a note that the British delegation could not remain at The Hague indefinitely ; reasonable proposals must be made to him, if it was to stay.

The French, Italian and Belgian delegations thereupon prepared a memorandum which M. Jaspar conveyed to Snowden ; the latter rejected it as inadequate, since it admitted only a third of the British claim. By way of emphasizing British determination, Mr. Henderson stated to the other committee that the withdrawal of the British troops from the Rhine would certainly begin in September. The Four Powers then framed an offer which would represent about 60 per cent. of Snowden's stated claim. As usual, private conversations and other forms of " secret diplomacy " were understood to be more likely to bring an agreement than open discussions.

The new offer, however, proved unacceptable ; Snowden was following out his old dictum that " You never lose in the long run by sticking to your convictions." Had the other delegates known more of his career, they would not have wasted time in futile efforts.

The Financial Committee met once more on the afternoon of August 27th. Snowden himself

feared, after the opening speeches, that a breakdown was inevitable. M. Briand pleaded that mere financial claims should be subordinated to the future peace of Europe ; Snowden retorted that this was exactly what he had been waiting for, all these three weeks.

The room grew hot, and the Conference adjourned for a few minutes, Snowden and his party occupying one room, the rest another, and M. Jaspar acting as messenger between the two. The first offer he brought represented two-thirds of Snowden's demands ; the latter rejected it, and wrote down on a half-sheet of note-paper the minimum which he would accept. Half an hour later the Belgian Premier brought another and slightly better offer. Snowden, as he afterwards related over the wireless, pointed out that the Allies had made an advance of £100,000 in half an hour and that, at this rate of progress, the British claims could be satisfied by midnight.

M. Jaspar's next visit, again with a slight advance, was received by Snowden with the cheerful words, "You are doing first-rate. Be not weary in well-doing !" Half an hour before midnight the offers had risen to within a quarter of a million pounds of Snowden's minimum, and M. Jaspar exclaimed hopelessly that the limit of concession was reached ; the Allies' pockets were empty.

"Go through your pockets again," Snowden suggested. And, sure enough, by midnight, as he had predicted, the minimal British claims were conceded.

Snowden had not, it is true, retrieved all that the Young Committee wished England to forgo; but, broadly speaking, he had reduced a decrease of £2,400,000 a year to one of £400,000. To set off this difference, he gained four valuable concessions. First, the British share of the "unconditional" annuities was raised from £2,000,000 to £4,800,000; secondly, there was to be no resale of Reparation goods in foreign markets; thirdly, Italy undertook to purchase a million tons of British coal every year for three years; and fourthly, a system of Reparations control was to be set up.

It had been an uphill fight; Snowden had to overcome both the opposition of the Allies and the previous acquiescence of the British experts in the original Young scheme. He won a real diplomatic victory—one of the victories of Peace which he has always considered more glorious than those of War.

* * * * *

Where does Snowden's future lie?

The thunder of applause which crashed from

the columns of every periodical in Great Britain—with the exception of the I.L.P. *New Leader*, and the Communists—was a tribute not so much to the results of the Conference at The Hague as to his personal attitude. Rightly or wrongly, the country decided that it was time an English statesman made an emphatic stand against the Allies' demands. Too long, it was felt, England had been the *mari complaisant* of her Continental alliances. No one bothered much about the actual facts of the settlement ; Snowden's defiance was the thing !

In vain, Mr. Duff Cooper, a Conservative, pointed out in *The Times* that, had any Conservative delegate confronted the Allies in this manner, risking the collapse of the Conference, he would have been condemned by the Labour Party as a fire-eating wrecker ; and that the secret of Snowden's strength was his confidence in the support of all sections of British opinion. Even more vainly the left wing of Labour complained that he had done " the real dirty work of British capitalism," at the expense of the future peace of the world. The country was in no mood to stomach criticism of Snowden and his achievement. It is to be presumed that he has accepted the extravagant praise which was showered on him as philosophically as he disregarded unbridled abuse from the same sources during the War.

The British public takes little interest in the major problems of national and international affairs. The popular press has made politics in England a raree-show, wherein the heroes of its changing fancy are depicted as impeccable master-minds ; while it offers those whom it opposes as Aunt Sallies for every missile. The recent extension of the franchise to every callow youth and girl of twenty-one has still further increased the emotional, at the expense of the intelligent, valuation of Parties and policies. Crude appeals to sentiment, greed and fright, have taken the place of reasoned arguments. The level of British electioneering tactics, never very high, is falling lower and lower. The demagogue and the sententious figure-head are ousting the serious statesman.

As has been demonstrated throughout this book, Snowden has never sought to win votes and popularity at the expense of his principles. These have remained fixed during his whole career. Nevertheless, as everyone must realize who has followed the recent progress of the Labour Party, it owes much of its prominence to its support by the poorest classes of the electorate, whom it has assured that the day of justice is at hand, when the rich shall be humbled and the poor set in the seats of the mighty. It is problematical, however, how long the present moderate leaders of the Party will

be able to control the passions it has unchained. Will its disappointed dupes turn upon those who have held out hopes which, in the day of their Parliamentary triumph, they cannot realize? Will the Left Wing of the Party draw away from its colleagues, and carry with it the sillier voters in working-class constituencies? This split seems inevitable, unless the leaders become more extreme.

But perhaps there is an alternative policy for them to pursue. The Liberal Party is moribund. It is kept alive, at election after election, only through violent drugs administered by its most vigorous personality, Lloyd George. At one election, it goes to the country with an incongruous Land Policy; at another, it produces an Unemployment panacea; at all, it is unsuccessful. The backbone of its political philosophy, Individualism, has been shattered by the march of events, and lies crushed between the upper millstone of Rationalization and the nether millstone of Nationalization. The Radicals are already flocking to the Labour ranks; while, on the other hand, many erstwhile Liberals, agreeing with Winston Churchill that present-day Toryism is more "advanced" than pre-War Radicalism, have followed him into the Conservative Party.

A large number of Liberals, nevertheless, still remain outside these two camps. They rightly

suspect both the other Parties of having, at present, little in common with old-time Liberalism. Some of the older men may reconcile themselves to dropping out of Party politics altogether ; but such inaction will appeal neither to the young men nor to the officials of local Liberal associations. Both these groups are ambitious—let us be generous—to serve the community. Which way will they go : Conservative or Labour ? The answer depends upon which of the two Parties makes the bigger bid for their support, by so modifying its programme as to satisfy not too exigent Liberal consciences.

Here, then, is the opportunity for Snowden and the other moderate leaders of the Labour Party to balance the probable defection of its extreme wing, by attracting the moderate Liberals. Lord Haldane led the way ; many others are ready to follow him. If the present Labour leaders steer their course Liberal-wards, the House of Commons of the near future may consist of the following Parties :

(*a*) The Conservatives and the Churchillian ex-Liberals, calling themselves the " National Party " or the " Centre Party." The extreme Right Wing, the die-hard Tories, may hold themselves aloof ; but there are not enough of these to matter.

(*b*) The Labour Party, led by its present chiefs

—Snowden, MacDonald, Henderson, Thomas—and the bulk of the remaining Liberals.

(*c*) A group of more extreme Socialists, and one or two Communists.

(*d*) A few independent Liberals.

It is not difficult to prophesy the main controversies upon which their battles will be fought. Two of the old feuds have been settled: Ireland has been given, by a Coalition Conservative-Liberal Government, more independence than Gladstone and the Home Rulers of the past thought of advocating ; and the House of Lords has been shorn of most of its power. The fight between the Free Traders and the Protectionists persists, but in a modified form. For a quarter of a century it has been argued as if it were a moral issue ; but to-day it has degenerated into a manufacturers' quarrel about two systems, each of which may be successfully applied to certain industries.*

This is the sort of muddled dispute England likes ; she will find a splendid substitute for it in Nationalization.

We shall witness the spectacle of men and women, who would not dream of restoring municipal enterprises into private hands, passionately declaring on the hustings that Nationalization is worthless and

* Lord Beaverbrook's proposals for an Imperial tariff wall, however, if persisted in, may renew the discussion on a higher plane.

impracticable ; while, on the other hand, people who have no intention of transferring their own industries to the State or the municipalities, will preach that private enterprise is utterly impracticable and worthless. The fact that Nationalization can be sometimes good and sometimes bad, will be ignored. Nationalization and opposition to Nationalization will become two standards, under which large, disciplined battalions will vow to conquer or to perish. The contest will become sentimental, ethical, almost religious.

The Capital Levy also, another matter of practical economics, will be apotheosized by one Party and excommunicated by the other. Heavier taxes on unearned dividends may create a new form of electoral Class War. There will be plenty of scope for the demagogue.

And meanwhile, by tacit agreement between the leaders of the main Parties, the serious affairs of the nation will be administered. In this, the most important political task of all, Snowden must inevitably take a leading part, for he has made good a claim to practical statesmanship, and he has always disdained Party manœuvres.

All factions respect him for his capacity, his integrity and his courage. They know that, unlike most of his Labour colleagues, he not only means what he says, but understands

what he means and says. Clear, cold logic is his inspiration.

Moreover, he has few enemies. Even before the Hague Conference, he had re-established his popularity in the House of Commons. The extreme Labour men, who despise while they envy most of the leaders of their Party, exclude "Philip" from their vituperations. He has always been the individualist of the Labour Movement; this saves him from their shafts. As for the rest of the country, an opponent at Westminster once described him as possessing "the bitterest tongue and the sweetest smile in the House."

This pithy comment seems to me the most subtle and significant personal judgment which has ever been passed on the extraordinary man whose career has been described in these pages.

I have shown how he rose, even in his earliest years, triumphant over the harsh conditions of his boyhood; how he raised himself to the forefront of the nascent Labour political movement, and raised it with him; how he imposed his personality, his sincerity and his eloquence upon unsympathetic audiences in lecture-rooms, at elections and at Westminster; how he stood by his beliefs even when these were repudiated by the bulk of his associates and by the overwhelming majority of his countrymen; how he made inevitable his choice

as Chancellor of the Exchequer, so soon as Labour came to power ; and how, in this high and most responsible office of State, he won, both at home and abroad, the applause of those very bodies in the nation who had viewed his appointment with most uneasiness.

To rise from a Cowling weaver's cottage to the Treasury is a wonderful achievement ; but I do not believe that this will be the end. It is not unreasonable to predict that, before many more years pass, we shall see Philip Snowden Prime Minister. Then indeed it will no longer be held a reproach to the men of Cowling that they sought to " raäke t' moon owt o' t' pond " ; for Snowden will have done it.

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